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# THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

IMPRIMATUR
FOR THE ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION

*Par ordre du R^me^ Père Joseph-Marie Larroca, Maître Général des Frères Prêcheurs, Nous, soussignés, avons lu attentivement le livre qui a pour titre* Jésus-Christ, *par le P. Didon, des Frères Prêcheurs, Lecteur en sacrée Théologie.*

*Non seulement toute la partie dogmatique de ce livre est conforme aux enseignements de la Théologie, mais la partie historique, à son tour, y est noblement comprise et exposée.*

*L'auteur montre Jésus-Christ dans le milieu où il a vécu, le dominant par la divinité du but qu'il se propose, et des moyens qu'il emploie. S'il parle quelquefois le langage des adversaires, on s'aperçoit bientôt qu'il veut surtout les combattre sur leur terrain, et il y réussit*

*spécialement lorsqu'il invoque contre leurs théories d'impiété,* à priori, *les arguments positifs de l'histoire.*

*La forme elle-même, à la fois simple et noble, répond à la grandeur du sujet.*

*Pour ces motifs, nous croyons le présent livre digne d'être publié.*

*Rome,* 20 *mars* 1890.

Fr. Albertus Lapide S. Th. Mag. in Collegio
S^t Thomæ de urbe, Stud. Regens.

Fr. Joachim Berthier, O. P.
S. Th. Lector.

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Fr. Joseph Marie Larroca

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# THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

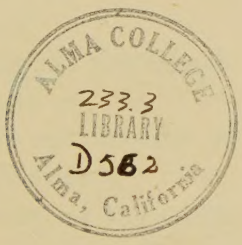
BY THE LATE

REV. PÈRE DIDON

*of the Order of Saint Dominic*

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

*SIXTH EDITION IN ONE VOLUME*

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## MAP

MAP OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST . . *Front.*

# REV. PÈRE DIDON

Henri Didon was born at Touvet (Isère), France, on the 17th of March, 1840. His early education was at the Seminary of Grenoble, which he left at the age of eighteen to enter the Dominican Order at Flavigny ; from there he went to Rome to complete his studies at the Minerva. At the age of twenty-eight he began at the Madeleine, Paris, by the invitation of the Archbishop, a series of brilliant orations which placed him in the first rank of Catholic preachers. " A sincere desire," says Arthur L. McMahon, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, " to communicate his faith to others, coupled with accomplished art, enabled him to make the most of the qualities of an orator with which Nature had endowed him. He had a majestic carriage, strong features, a massive forehead, black eyes, a vibrating voice which he perfectly controlled, and an ease in emphasizing his words by superb gestures. Frank, straightforward, and sympathetic, he readily won the hearts of his hearers, whom he dominated by his presence." He was a loyal son of the Church, whose place in modern civilization he strenuously endeavoured to strengthen. His deeply religious character is manifested throughout his writings. After twelve years' labour as a preacher he retired to Corbara, in Corsica, to devote himself to his greatest work, the *Life of Christ*. There for seven years, during which he made long visits to the Holy Land, he gave himself to this most arduous task. " I have," he wrote, " attempted this work with infinite humility. . . Everyone of His words and acts has seemed to me like a diamond or a precious pearl : I have been content to imitate the art of the jeweller in sorting the stones, cut by a Divine hand, and in mounting them I have only endeavoured to give them more relief and greater brightness." This book, which attempts to call him up before the ages, " is addressed to the conscience of my contemporaries. To Christ as the Church knows Him, I would turn the eyes of this generation." The *Life of Christ* met with immediate success. It was translated into several languages, and in English went through five editions. This edition, the sixth, appears in an abridged form, but nothing essential has been omitted. The present Editor can adopt the words of Père Didon in his original preface and say : " I have spared no effort to render it less unworthy of Him whose history it relates." After the publication of this work, Père Didon reappeared in the French pulpit, where he delivered a series of Lenten Conferences on Jesus Christ ; but the remainder of his life was almost entirely devoted to the education of youth in the Dominican Colleges. He died at Toulouse on the 13th of March, 1900, at the age of sixty.—J.M.

# PREFACE

## BY THE AUTHOR

JESUS CHRIST is the great name in history. There are others for whom men have died; he alone is adored by all people, in all nations, and in all times.

The greatest intellects of the past would be forgotten if memorials, as palaces, obelisks or tombs; if written testimonies, as papyrus or parchments, bricks, columns or medals, had not preserved their memory. Jesus survives in the conscience of the faithful: there is his witness and indestructible monument. The Church founded by him fills time and space with his name. She knows him, she loves him, she adores him. As he lives in her she lives in him. He is her dogma, her moral law, her worship. She teaches to all without exception, that he is the only Son of God made man, conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin; that he has come into the world to suffer and to die for our salvation, to conquer death by his resurrection; that he has ascended to his Father, in order to prepare us a place near him; that he will return to judge the quick and the dead, giving to the good life eternal, casting the bad into darkness and spiritual death.

This Creed is at once dogma and history : it is the dogma and the popular history of Jesus. By it the believer can live. In a few deep and simple words, he learns that the greatest event in human history is the birth of Christ ; that God loves him, since God willed to save him from evil and to give himself to him ; that charity is the supreme duty, because it was through love that his Master died ; that he must be unwearied in well-doing, since his Master will be his judge ; that he need not fear death, since his Master has overcome it, and because he himself is predestined to eternal life.

The man who believes in this teaching and in this Christ can go forward through life ; he is armed for defence ; he may grow great, and nothing can stay him. The disciple of Jesus has become the sovereign of the world, but in no material nor brutal way ; for the spirit of his crucified Master is only violent in regard to justice, goodness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and moral worth. By sowing these virtues as the seeds of life, he prepares and enriches the human soil, which thereby becomes capable of the highest cultivation and of the richest harvest.

It will be said that there is no further need to write about Jesus ; the Gospels, because perfect, are enough ; no more should be attempted than to reduce them to harmony, and translate them into our modern languages. But history is not only a narration of facts ; if it be first and above all a pictorial work, its duty is to frame the facts and replace them in their surroundings.

I have carefully endeavoured to frame the life of Jesus in what I will call his pictorial and geographical surroundings, and in his social and Jewish life. Two long journeys enabled me very closely to study Palestine, the land of Jesus ; I have travelled through it slowly, in every direction, following the traces of the Master from Bethlehem and Hebron to the boundaries of Tyre and Sidon and the sources of Jordan. I stayed long in those very places where Jesus lived the longest, where he strove and suffered most ardently, taught the most, and loved the most. I have endeavoured to see the places as they were eighteen hundred years ago ; their present desolation, their heaps of ruins, the buildings raised by the piety of Christians, have scarce left anything of their primitive state. I have examined ancient traditions, questioned the most experienced travellers, above all, studied the Gospels ; indeed I may say that I lived them there, in the land wherein all their narrative was accomplished. Those who have assailed the reality of the history of Jesus cannot have seen Palestine ; if they had studied it, the Gospel in hand, they would have understood that the Gospel was not invented.

No life presents a closer harmony with the land in which it was spent than that of Christ. Galilee, with the town of Nazareth, the Lake of Tiberias, Tabor with its hills and its green valleys, make a fitting frame for Jesus, living for thirty years unknown, for the apostle, the popular teacher, announcing the Gospel of the Kingdom, instructing the crowd in parables, leading them into the desert, and revealing in the

mountain to the disciples his eternal glory. On the other hand, Judaea, austere and arid, with its rocky hills, Jerusalem with its valley of Cedron and gloomy tombs, harmonize well with the Prophet, misconstrued and rejected, condemned to an ignominious death. I seem to have gained, in contact with Palestine, with its ruins and the sacred memories of which it is full, a profound feeling of the Gospel facts and their truth, their reality, and their beauty. The facts are inseparable from the land. It may become sadder yet, more desolate and more dead; it always frames them in its light, in its valleys and undulating hills, in the roads where Jesus passed, and where endless generations still pass and repass after him.

In beginning this work, I have not concealed from myself either its greatness or its difficulty; I have felt them growing as my task proceeded, and now that I see it ended I am conscious of its incompleteness and inadequacy; yet I have spared no effort to render it less unworthy of him whose history I have told. One profound conviction has sustained me: Christ, living and acting by his Spirit in the Church, is the salvation of men and of nations to-day.

Written in solitude and silence, far from all which sets men asunder, the fruit of the long and persevering work, I may say, of my whole life, it has been no work agitated by polemics, but a quiet work of history and faith. It has seemed to me, as I wrote the life of our Master, that his loveliness, his sweetness, his wisdom, his saintliness, his love, his divinity, shining through all his acts and sorrows, would defend him better

than our weak arguments and our empty angers. I trust that something of him, a breath of his soul and spirit, may have passed into these pages. I would hand on to all what he has given to me.

To Christ, as the Church knows him, I would turn the eyes of this generation. It is sick : he will heal it ; old and worn : he will restore its youth and its great dreams ; for his disciples are men of eternal hope.

If I might venture to borrow the words of the greatest evangelist, I would say : " These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God." That is the faith of the Church ; which I confess in the fulness of my reason and my liberty. To her infallible judgment I commit this book, approving what she approves, rejecting what she rejects, remembering the words of Jesus : " Who heareth you heareth me ; who despiseth you, despiseth me."

# LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

## CHAPTER I

### THE TIME

BEFORE relating the story of his life, we must briefly notice the state of mankind, when he who loved to call himself the " Son of Man " was born.

I

Every age contains a certain number of general facts which characterize it and sum up its complex life. Just as it would be impossible to judge of modern times without taking account of democracy and socialism in the social order ; of the influence of armies and assemblies in the political order ; of experimental science in the intellectual order ; of Christianity and unbelief in the religious order ; so, when we study the age of the Messiah, it is impossible not to take account of four grand facts : Roman policy, Paganism, Greek philosophy, and Judaism. They dominate and contain all ; mixed together, they act on each other, each in its own fashion stirred consciences and nations, and their providential action is the only explanation of the movement which, from the beginning, bore mankind towards its destined goal.

The Roman Empire was the assemblage under one sceptre of almost all the peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the greatest conquering and organizing political power which the world has ever seen.

Greece and Italy, the islands and shores of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor and the centre of Asia, Syria, and Phoenicia, Egypt and Western Africa, Spain and Gaul, Germany from the Danube to the Rhine, were all conquered by Rome. Her legions, generals, and governors covered the earth. Her military roads started from the Forum and spread northward

to Scotland, westward to Lusitania and the ocean, southward to the Thebais, eastward to the desert of Arabia. The authority of the Roman people was over all, with its law, its language and customs. The rest of the world, Northern Germany, Armenia, the kingdom of Parthia, India and China, Arabia and Ethiopia, were the frontiers of this colossal empire.

Augustus was on the throne, holding in his hand all power and authority, he was Tribune, Prefect and High Priest, in one word, Imperator. He bore a name reserved for the gods alone; he sent his surveyors to measure the world, census-takers to catalogue his riches and to number his subjects. He constructed roads, built aqueducts, temples, and towns, and gave his people bread, games, and festivals, even to satiety.

After having everywhere brought ruin and devastation, the beast of the prophet Daniel lay down to rest. Round him the nations which had not obeyed him were for a moment quiet; the universe seemed to sleep under the wing of the Roman eagle; peace was universal. A great historian was recounting the glory of the most powerful among the nations, two great poets were celebrating it, one in immortal odes, the other in the most musical of epics. The temple of Janus was closed; for twelve years the god of war had not issued from it. In this hour of silence, when the sword slept, he was born to whom the prophets gave the names of "Father of a new time," "Prince of Peace."[1] It was a great date in human history.

II

Over and above the political facts were the religious facts. Politics relate to that force which binds together the nations materially from outside; religion is the power which holds them in a spiritual chain and by conscience. The barbarians in their forests; great nations like the Hindoos and Chinese, behind their mountains; the Parthians and Arabs, in their vast desert plains; the Ethiopians under their torrid sky, submitted at last to one; but there was no race, no country, no state, except the Jewish, unaffected by it in religious matters. Egyptians and Syrians, Phoenicians and Carthaginians, Armenians, and Parthians, Greeks and Romans,

[1] Isaiah ix. 6.

Germans and Celts, civilized men and savages, Aryans, Semites, and Turanians, all, without exception, were carried as by a torrent to the same religious aberrations which the Christian conscience, four centuries later, brought under the one approbrious name of Paganism.

For thirty centuries Paganism had reigned over the human race, and the terrible yoke evermore grew heavier. It was as burdensome under Augustus, the high priest, at Rome, as under the Pharaohs of Egypt and the kings of Assyria ; its deadly character only grew worse with time.

Pantheism grew more refined ; the number of deities endlessly increased. Rome, latest comer among pagan nations, surpassed the others in the fecundity with which she peopled her Pantheon ; she counted her gods by thousands. The symbols were veiled in the recesses of the temples, and reserved for the initiated ; but they were still obscene. Mythologies continued to inspire the genius of sculptors and poets ; the gods grouped themselves round Jupiter as their sovereign. In seeking for unity in this ever-increasing crowd of divinities, philosophers could only find it in Fate, which, like the symbolical serpent, embraced in an inflexible circle all nature, man, the universe, and the gods.

Superstition increased; astrologers interpreted the future, and the seers of Chaldaea and the East took possession of Rome. The priests became a dominant caste, of which the deified emperor was the chief. The Saturnalia and Bacchanalia grew more and more indecent ; the very security of the state demanded that they should be abolished ; if the cruelty of the rites seemed to yield to gentler manners, if human blood ran in floods less abundant, corruption, on the other hand, became worse. It is a sad history of a tide oscillating between the two accursed shores, murder and lust, tossing about the whole human race at the pleasure of Melkart and Mylitta.

## III

Beyond the political and religious forces is that of reason.

At the time that Rome was mistress of the world, and Paganism bore rule over mankind, Greek philosophy had the sole authority. Philosophy, which in human life plays so large a part, took its birth in the Hellenic world six or seven

centuries before Jesus Christ, on the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, at Miletus, Smyrna, Ephesus, Lampsacus, Clazomenae, Scyros, Apollonia, Samos, Agrigentum, Elea, Abdera, Athens, Cyrene, Stagira, Ellis, and Cytirium, each of which claimed the honour of having given birth to one of the masters of the great philosophic schools.

To philosophy, as to literature, poetry, and art, Greece has given its typical forms and has realized the ideal. It is possible to equal, but not to surpass the masters. Empedocles and Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle and Plato, Zeno and Epicurus, in their way, are as perfect as Praxiteles and Phidias, Homer or Pindar, Euripides or Sophocles, Æschylus or Demosthenes. Whoever, after that creative age, wills to become a philosopher, that is, wills to solve the problem of the value of reason, of the principle of things, the destiny of man and the conduct of life, must acknowledge a forerunner and a master among the Ionians or Pythagoreans, the Eleatic philosophers or the Sophists, in the Porch or Academy. In this active period, so excited, but so fruitful, system succeeded to system, and school overthrew school; the dynamism of Thales and Pherecydes gave place to the atomism of Democritus; the positivism of Parmenides to the abstractions of Pythagoras; dogmatism was outflanked by the nihilism of the sophists, like Protagoras and Gorgias; Socrates routed the sophists and prepared the reign of Plato and Aristotle; and lastly, Pyrrho was born again, and Epicurus and Zeno strove for the mastery over consciences. There was not a single error which had not its apostles, and not a reasonable truth which had not its disciples; but in spite of these efforts reason always showed itself weak and hesitating before certain essential truths: pure theism, the creation of matter, immortality and future life.

IV

It was necessary that Jesus Christ should be born from among the Jewish people. It is the humblest of all nations; but it has given birth to Christ, and, for this very reason, it takes place, in spite of its littleness, beside and above the Roman empire, the religions of heathendom, Hellenic culture, and the greatest powers of history. Other nations seem given over to the initiative of their own intellects, and the mercy of

their vices; Israel increased under the high guardianship of God. Apart from all, and kept by him, it appeared in the midst of the human floods as the ark which held the salvation of the future. The development of the kingdom of man, with its religious transformations, cannot be explained without Judaism. Jehovah, its God, has become the God of mankind and its Messiah, always expected, but finally misunderstood by it, has become the Saviour and the Regenerator of the world.

Nothing in history better proves the work of God than thi little people, assailed on all sides by universal heathendom and never subdued by it. Amid all its wanderings across the most diverse civilizations, it occasionally borrowed from Chaldean and Assyrian traditions, from the doctrines and worship of Egypt, from Persian theology, and Greek philosophy, but it purified them all and itself remained the same

When all was Pantheistic, it was not so; all idolatrous, it stood firm; when all worshipped nature, it worshipped not; when all were fetishists, it yielded not. Around it, chiefs and kings were made into divinities; it recognized in Abraham only a father, and carefully concealed the tomb of Moses, who remained simply its supreme law-giver. It slew the prophets; but the words remained in force, and the voice of the dead became only more eloquent to those who had misunderstood them. It resisted all: idolatry, philosophy, Greek culture, persecution, and time, more terrible than all; it resisted even its own Messiah. It may be said of the Jew that if he were neither a convert or pervert, and if he never changed anything, he at least preserved everything. This, under God, was the part he was destined to play.

In the midst of the weariness and disgust which enfeebled the ancient world, a vast hope ever swelled in the breast of this people; it alone believed in the redemption of man, alone in a prodigy inexplicable by reason; it looked forward to the age of gold to which all other nations looked back. Thanks to Judaism, the idea of God had ever shone on a darkened world, and its action had always been visible amid all human extravagances. From the Jewish blood, quickened by the Spirit, he was born whose name is Saviour, the Being who realized the prophetic ideal and snatched the human soul from the bottomless abyss of error and vice in which for centuries it had struggled, vanquished, and despaired.

The imperfection and mistakes of man, his illusions and narrowness of mind, always leave their imprint on the vast work of God. The Jews, as a whole, were false to their destiny; they mingled the most absurd exclusiveness with the grand idea of one God; they stifled the lofty morality of Moses under wholly material observances and rites; they degraded their hopes of a Messiah to the level of their race prejudices, of their national and religious preconceptions. They thought that Jehovah, the one true God, was their special God; their ritual and ceremonial law the necessary and universal condition of salvation; and the expected Messiah the great conqueror who should at last avenge their long oppression.

These prejudices had blinded and hardened the popular conscience to such an extent that Judaism, destined by Providence to prepare the way for the Messiah, became the greatest obstacle to the Messianic work. But as Paganism had its elect who escaped the universal contagion, so Judaism had its faithful people, a little unknown flock, knowing not the mistakes of doctors, priests and people, keeping in silence their hope in God.

The Gospel documents throw a flood of light on this portion of the nation set apart, on these "Israelites without guile,"[1] among whom God was to choose the instruments for his work. Many types borrowed from different groups are sketched in lines calm but sure, firm and deep. The old priest Zacharias, the shepherds of Bethlehem, the aged Simeon, Anna the prophetess, enable us to see that, in the sacerdotal world, all consciences were not warped and petrified by the casuistry of the Scribes, that in the high and learned society of Jerusalem, and even in the middle classes, among the women above all, piety inspired their worship, and filled more than one heart with ardent prayers, pleading for the mercy of God on the people and for the coming of the true Saviour.

Such were the elements fused in mankind, towards the eighth century of Rome, in the 192nd Olympiad, and according to Jewish chronology, at the end of four thousand years from the creation. It was, according to the first word which fell from the lips of Jesus, "the fullness of time." The empire,

[1] John i. 47.

paganism, philosophy, official Judaism, all human forces had accomplished their evolution ; the world was dying, enslaved by Roman policy, degraded and brought to despair by false religions, asking philosophers in vain for the secrets of life and virtue. Judaism itself was in the death-throe, faithless to its destiny. There was never a more critical moment ; but God was over all, and among his elect people humble souls prayed and hoped. Beyond Judaism, a vague expectation, to which poets, historians and the Sibylline books bear witness, was astir, and kept the world in suspense : such a presentiment as goes before all the great events of history.

The birth of Jesus was at hand.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The birth of Jesus was unlike our own. He was not born like us, "of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man";[1] bringing to mankind the secret and the power of a new birth by the Spirit, he was born of a woman and of the Spirit of God.

The first scene passed in an obscure region of Galilee; the name, till then unknown, was Nazareth, which means flower or branch. Coming from Jerusalem, the little town is seen from the last hills of Samaria, as a white point on the scarped heights overlooking the plain of Jezreel; its grey houses, square, with flat roofs, are spread on the eastern slope of two hills, separated by a ravine, up which the steep main street of Nazareth climbs. There are the fountains for ablution, the workshops, the market, the synagogue. To the east of the town is a valley wherein is the well now called the Fountain of Mary. The ravine and the valley join each other, beyond the last houses, in a little plain which makes the grassy bottom of the cup within which Nazareth is placed. There, in one of those quiet homes, lived unknown the maiden who was to receive the highest revelation of God. The maiden was called Mary, and was not yet sixteen years old.

Tradition says that her father was named Joachim and her mother Anne; it is believed that her father died when she was yet an infant; of royal descent and of the race of David, she was educated in the Temple. It was a strange thing that among a people of whose women each might hope to be the mother of the Messiah, in a race where, on that account, barrenness was a disgrace, she, obedient to a divine inspiration, vowed herself to God as a virgin. Yet, according to Jewish law and custom, being sole heiress, she was espoused and promised to a man named Joseph, of her own tribe and family,

[1] John i. 13.

her nearest relation who could receive her inheritance. The ceremony of entrance into her husband's house had not yet been celebrated; she lived in her mother's home, preparing her wedding-garments, like all the young women of her country.

Now, one day, she saw, under a human form, Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appear to her, and enter the house.

The angel said to her: "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." Jewish maidens, when betrothed, live retired and concealed with their companions, far from the sight of men.

"And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The Virgin then understood that he spoke of the expected Saviour, who should raise for ever the throne of David which had been cast down, who should be the glory of Israel, the desire of the nations, the pride of his mother. How should she be called to play this divine part, who had resolved never to become a mother after the manner of men?

In her surprise, she simply asked: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"[1]

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And the angel gave her a sign: "Thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."[2]

Such was the birth of Jesus.

When the Spirit of God acts in certain elect souls to the

[1] Luke i. 34. [2] Luke i. 35-38.

accomplishment of the same end, he draws them towards each other and associates them by an irresistible movement. On the day after that on which Mary was called to be the mother of Jesus, she went in all haste to another woman, her cousin, chosen, in spite of her age and her barrenness, to be the mother of John the Baptist.

Elisabeth dwelt with her husband, the priest Zacharias, in the mountains of Judea, in a little spot such as we frequently find in Palestine. The village called Karem, now Ain-Karim, is situated on a spur of the mountains, which overtops and closes in a circle of hills. Vineyards, diversified by olive and fig trees, abound, and the fountain which springs up near the village bears their name. On the unbroken line of the horizon are some little fortified watch-towers and a few tufts of terebinths and arbutus with their lustrous foliage.

The meeting of these two women, told at length by St. Luke, places in a full light all that was so strangely agitating this little inner circle in which the great hopes of Israel were beginning to be realized, and wherein God was preparing in secret the salvation of the human race.

Those who share the same sentiment understand each other without words; and the two mothers understood each other at once.

"And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."[1]

Then Mary declared to Elisabeth the mystery of her own vocation and motherhood.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

[1] Luke i. 41-45.

He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy: as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."[1]

Poetry is the language of strong impressions and lofty ideas; among the Jews, as among all Eastern nations, it was full of inspiration: every soul is poetic, and sings in joy or sorrow. If ever a full heart gave vent to an inspired hymn, it was the heart of the maiden elected by God to be the mother of the Messiah. Not thus speaks any mere woman, a daughter of Eve; this inspired canticle overpassed all earthly bounds, and closed the cycle of the older days; it was no longer hope which called upon God, but triumphant faith which saw and possessed him; it was the hymn of the new age, the most splendid cry of joy which ever sprang from a human breast.

The abode of Mary at Karem, in the house of Zacharias, lasted for three months. It was one long prayer, one uninterrupted confidence and adoration of the designs of God and the religious expectation of their fulfilment.

When her time was come, Elisabeth gave birth to a son, according to the promises which Zacharias had received, when one morning in the Temple at Jerusalem, at the time of offering incense, he saw at the right hand of the altar the angel of the Lord, and learned from him the great and religious destiny of the child.[2] The birth caused great stir in the neighbouring villages and among the kinsfolk of Zacharias; the advanced age of Elisabeth was known; this birth, beyond ordinary hope, proved that the power of God was there. On all sides the mother was congratulated.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the infant, and this was the occasion of new and extraordinary events. The parents and friends wished, according to custom, to give the first-born the name of his father, Zacharias, but the mother forbade it. Among the Jews the privilege of naming the child is reserved to the mother. Elisabeth, prompted by love and faith, chose that the name of the child should express the favour done to the mother. She said: "He shall

[1] Luke i. 46-55. [2] Luke i. 1-23.

be called John.[1] And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them : and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be ! And the hand of the Lord was with him."

All the neighbourhood was stirred, and talked of what had happened in the house of the old priest ; there was wonder in all the hill country of Judaea, where the tidings of these events were spread abroad. Messianic hopes were then alive among the people, and the great messenger was expected. The son of Zacharias might be either this messenger or some prophet. Men speculated about his future ; asking what this child should be, and, according to a favourite formula of the Hebrews, they said : The hand of the Lord is with him.[2]

While these uncertain rumours passed from village to village, the work of God was continued about the cradle of John. His father, too, was carried away by the ancient spirit of the prophets : he in part discovered the mystery of which Mary of Nazareth carried in her bosom the ineffable secret ; he had a perfect consciousness of the vocation of his son, he understood that all God had announced by the mouth of his saints and prophets from eternity was now accomplished, and, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he chanted a sublime prophecy :

" Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began : that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant ; the oath which he sware to out father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Then, turning to his son, he cried : " And thou, child, shalt

[1] " The Gift of God." [2] Luke i. 66.

be called the prophet of the Highest : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto the people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God ; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."[1]

The Gospels imply that Mary was not present at the birth of John and at the feast of his circumcision ; for it is only after his mention of her return to Nazareth that St. Luke narrates the event of which the house of Zacharias was the scene, and there is nothing to disclose or even to suggest her presence.[2] The Virgin was as yet only betrothed ; the ceremony of her reception into the home of her husband had not yet been celebrated : the time fixed for this family gathering was drawing on ; and she returned to Nazareth.

After the quiet days at Ain-Karim, a trial awaited her. The signs of her condition were evident ; it was not clear how God would preserve her maiden honour before men, and in the eyes of the bridegroom to whom she was affianced. Although this thought must have crossed the mind of Mary, that which would have been anguish to an ordinary soul who thought of herself, could not trouble the serenity of her who had said, " Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word." All those who feel, in any degree, instruments of God, give themselves with full faith to him ; who knows how to set aside or break down obstacles. " Mary," as Bossuet finely says, " gave up everything to God, and remained in peace."

Meanwhile at Nazareth, Joseph, who had not been told the mystery of which Mary kept the secret in her reserved humility, saw her state. Appearances led him to believe that his betrothed was unfaithful, but respect for her virtue forbade suspicion. Unable to guess the impenetrable designs of God, he hesitated. In his human justice he resolved on a course which seemed to him the best way out of the difficulty, that rather than make his betrothed a public example as an adulteress, he would put her away privately. In the midst of his doubts and anguish, at the moment when he was about to accomplish what he believed to be right, he had a dream by night : the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, saying :

[1] Luke i. 67-79. [2] Luke i. 56.

" Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins."[1]

The light of God, by whatever way it enters the conscience, is always clear. Joseph awoke and rose, and without hesitation obeyed the word of God.

The reception of Mary into the house of her betrothed was quickly celebrated, according to the law of Moses and the Jewish and Galilaean customs. There were seven days of feasting ; lambs were sacrificed ; there was a procession of girls, with lighted lamps, and sprays of myrtle.

The marriage had nothing, except the perfection of the pair, to distinguish it from others ; apart from Joseph and Mary no one suspected that, in the counsels of God, it was intended to prepare the cradle of Messiah, and to give the Christ and his mother the support of a man, who should be, according to the law, the husband of one and the father of the other. The bride and bridegroom lived as brother and sister, according to the discreet but direct expression of the Gospel, " And he knew her not."

Joseph understood the part that he was to take in the birth of Jesus ; he felt himself the guardian of two things alike sacred and weak, the virginity of his wife and the childhood of him who should be born of her.

Noble and gentle, this simple workman was to have the glory of passing among the Jews as the father of the Nazarene ; he was to remain a model of self-denial, devotion, and fidelity ; his name was to be united to the two most beloved names on earth, those of Mary and of Jesus ; the Christian Church was never to separate them in her worship ; in the midst of her trials, throughout the ages, overwhelmed by her human weakness, inheritor of the infirmities of Christ, whose burthen God has laid upon her, she was to lift her eyes toward this chosen man, and to call him her invisible protector.

The days passed on ; and the expectation was great at Nazareth in the house of Joseph the carpenter. The calm narrative of the Gospels does not give us the smallest detail ; but those who know a mother's heart understand the divine

[1] Matthew i. 20-22.

emotions of the Virgin on the eve of giving birth to the Christ. Earthly mothers are troubled in their vague dreams and look forward with anxiety to the mysterious future ; the mother of Jesus had infinite hopes, of which nothing could diminish the fulness nor trouble the serenity.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

A NEW event in the history of Judaea, towards the years 747-749 of Rome, put in motion the whole population of Herod's little kingdom, the eastern provinces, and the various states tributary to the empire.

Augustus had received from the senate the renewal of his imperial office for ten years. He had reached the end of the first five, and had numbered the Roman citizens, even in those towns which had civil rights, as Antioch, Berytus in Syria, and Tarsus in Cilicia. For the third time the doors of the temple of Janus had been closed ; never had there been more complete and universal peace in the empire. The master of the world took advantage of this, made his inventory like any wealthy proprietor, and as a wise farmer or steward measured his lands, numbered his subjects and allies, regulated the calendar, and noted his revenues in an account book, some fragments of which are still extant. He ordered a census of all the inhabitants of the provinces and of allied or vassal kingdoms ; Judaea, under the rule of Herod, was subject to this imperial edict.

The subservient king, whose policy never omitted any occasion of flattering Augustus, took good care not to disobey the will of his master : an order was given to all the Jews to enrol themselves, each in his own city, and to take an oath of fidelity to Caesar and the King.[1] This was the occasion of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, as Joseph belonged to this little town,[2] and legally had to be enrolled there. No doubt both saw the finger of God in the unexpected decree which took them to the very place, where, according to the prophets, the Saviour of Israel should be born.

[1] *Antiq.* xvii. 2-4.
[2] Luke i. 27.

The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is three or four days' journey, taking the direct road across the plain of Jezreel, the mountains of Samaria and Judaea, by Ginaea, Bethulia, Sichem, Lebonah, Bethel, Tel-el-Fûl, Jerusalem, and the plain of Rephaim. It was the constant caravan route ; ordinary people travelled on foot, but it is rare in Judaea not to find an ass with each family.

A halt was made near a well, beside the road, under the shade of some tree ; or at sunset, in the rainy season, at the entrance to the villages, in the caravanserai which served as a shelter to travellers and their beasts ; at dawn the journey was resumed, the travellers singing psalms which spoke of Jerusalem and the house of Jehovah ; the end of the journey was reached by easy stages. Thus it was that Joseph and Mary travelled, together with those whom the edict of Augustus brought, as it did them, to Bethlehem or some other town of Judah.

Bethlehem (in Hebrew *Beth-Lehem*, " The House of Bread ") lies two leagues to the south of Jerusalem, above the plain of Rephaim, in the very heart of the mountains of Judaea. It occupies the summit of two hills, joined one to the other in form of a crescent ; deep valleys isolate it on all sides ; that on the south, the most fertile, the Wady-el-Karroubeh, between the two points of the crescent, is a steep slope, so that the walls of the terraces made to bank up the soil give it the aspect of a vast and verdant amphitheatre, covered with vines, olives, and figs, with almond and carob trees. The horizon, narrowed to the north and west by the mountains, opens magnificently to the south and east. There was the cornfield where Ruth the Moabitess went to glean, and hard by the little hill, with the village of Beit-Saour, was the threshing-floor of Boaz. Further is the desert of Judaea with its sandy hills, like a mass of grey cinders. The sun shines upon this barren scene, but nothing grows there. Behind, in a basin over which rise, as a rampart, the blue and violet masses of the hills of Moab, the Dead Sea hides its blue waters. To the south a lonely mountain raises its cone : Herodion, where the old king Herod desired to be buried and to sleep his eternal sleep.

Such is the little country which saw the birth of David, and to which his descendants were now hastening. The houses were full of people, the village khan, or inn, was full.

When Mary and Joseph came, there was no room for them. They had to find shelter in a neighbouring cave, one of the hollows so often found in Palestine, half way up the side of a chalk hill. This was called the manger, or stable ; it was at the extremity of the place, on the point looking towards Hebron, and was used as a shelter for cattle. Here the two homeless travellers betook themselves, and in that mean place was born the Son of David, whom the angel had announced to his mother as the Holy One, the Son of God, the Saviour, and the heir of an eternal throne. This fact, the most important in history, is related by the evangelist in a few simple and sublime words as if he were speaking of the lowest of the Bethlehemites :

" And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger ; because there was no room for them in the inn."[1]

This happened on a December night, in the month of Tebeth, according to the Jewish calendar, unknown by anyone, without other witness than Mary and Joseph. The little town lay asleep, unsuspecting the birth of him, who, rather than David, was to render it immortal. But the Spirit of God was fully poured out on this cave and the neglected cradle ; and was to draw thither the elect.

At the foot of Bethlehem, a little beyond Beit-Saour, in the very plain where Boaz once had fields of wheat and barley, and where Ruth had come to glean, shepherds were keeping their flocks. Shepherds, in the East, represent the lowest class of the agricultural population ; they are the servants of servants. The farmer does no work ; he has his labourers, workmen, and shepherds. They may be seen at the present day, their head covered with a long black veil, a sheepskin on their shoulders, their feet either naked or shod with sandals, a staff of oak or sycamore in their hand, and they watch from dark to dawn, seated on some rock, round large fires. The earth, sown later in the year, is covered, from the first rains, with grass and flowers, and the flocks live on this early herbage. While the shepherds of Beit-Saour watched their flocks by night, " Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone

[1] Luke ii. 6-7.

round about them : and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you : Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."[1]

" And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."[2]

The shepherds returned to their flocks and told the wondrous tale of what they had seen, glorifying and praising God. It does not seem, however, that the testimony of these poor people either stirred Bethlehem or troubled the peaceful lowliness of Jesus' cradle : he remained unknown with his mother and Joseph, but Mary kept all these sayings in her heart ; like all mothers, she made her memories a treasure, a sort of inward book, which she read over and over tenderly.

After eight days the child, according to the law of Moses, was circumcised in the same house which sheltered the humble strangers. To all appearance their family festival was like those of the very poorest people ; all was done simply and quietly, there was nothing extraordinary except the prophetic name given to the infant, and even that of Jesus might seem common, for other children bore it. It would have its divine meaning in Jesus only to the eyes of faith, in the souls of the father and mother.

The first-born of every living creature, among the Jews, was offered to God ; and in order to redeem it, five shekels of Jewish money, or an hundred pence, were paid. Thirty-three days after circumcision, the woman who had given birth went to the Temple for her purification ; if rich, she brought a lamb for sacrifice ; if poor, a pair of doves. In obedience to this Mosaic law, Mary and Joseph came from Bethlehem

[1] Luke ii. 9-14. [2] Luke ii. 15-17.

to Jerusalem, on the appointed day, taking Jesus with them. They presented themselves in the Court of the Women, before the Gate of Nicanor, at the foot of the steps where was the entry to the Court of the Priests, in front of the Altar of Burnt Offerings. They gave the five pieces, and Mary handed over to the priest two doves.

An unexpected and interesting event then happened. The courts and porches of the Temple, as are the mosques at present, were filled at the hours of sacrifice and prayer by a crowd who came to sacrifice, to bring their offerings, to perform their ablutions, and to recite the Geüllah, or prayer of redemption.

Among the Jews who asked of God that they might see the day of the Messiah and of the Life of future generations, and who, kneeling before the altar of offerings, saw Mary give her son to the priest, was an old man named Simeon. The Spirit of God had led him to the Temple at the very moment when Jesus was presented. A sudden illumination made known to him that this Saviour was the very child whom a poor woman was presenting to the priest ; he took him in his arms, and, like Zacharias, the old man too became a prophet :

" Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

These sublime words have entered deeply into the Christian conscience, as the immortal expression of the joy of hopeful men who see at last the good in which they have believed with the perseverance of unconquerable faith.

When their religious duties were accomplished, Joseph and Mary quitted Jerusalem and returned with Jesus into their own land, to Nazareth in Galilee. It was then in the month Shebat, in the first days of February. A project, of which we see clear traces, had little by little ripened in the mind of Joseph. Faithful to his mission of watching over the child which God had entrusted to him, he wished to treat him in accordance with his Messianic destiny. A prophet, the expected Saviour, the Messiah, should live and act in the kingdom of Judah.

The religious expectations of the Jews in regard to the future of their race, that the Messiah was to bear sway over the world, were not confined within the limits of the little nation, but had penetrated Paganism and the East, giving a ray of hope to minds which had lost faith in Imperial Rome ; these expectations were in the air ; poets, historians, philosophers, priests, and astrologers, all dealt with them when they made researches into the future.

In a land which the Gospel does not specify, but which can only be Chaldaea, Mesopotamia, Persia, or Arabia Petraea, for these are the countries described in Scripture under the vague name of the East, wise men, who sought in the book of the stars the secrets of the future, Magi, as we call them, saw one day a new star in the sky, whether it were a meteor, a star properly so called, or a comet.

Struck with this phenomenon, they examined the traditions of their elders and masters, and, illuminated no doubt by divine light, they recognised the sign of the great ruler promised to Judaea.

Three among them left their country and took the road to Jerusalem ; where their rich and gorgeous caravan excited attention. They asked on all sides, and without throwing any doubt on the event which, according to them, must have been fulfilled, they went about, saying everywhere : " Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." The words of these strangers came to the ears of Herod ; the king was troubled, and Jerusalem was disturbed, where the hope of the Deliverer always found some eager souls. Thus disquieted, Herod called together the heads of religion and the doctors, and enquired of them where Christ should be born. They all answered : " In Bethlehem of Judaea." The Scriptures are plain, the tradition unanimous, and the prophet had said distinctly : " But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

The old king, thus warned, " privily called the wise men, and enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared, and he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child ; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."[1]

[1] Matt. ii. 8.

It does not seem that the Magi understood the secret plot hidden under the eager words of Herod. No doubt they were ignorant of the history of this ambitious ruler who himself wished to play the part of Messiah, and who shrank from no crime to put down those who might insult his jealous royalty.

Having heard the king, they departed, and they had no sooner left Jerusalem than the star which they had seen in the east reappeared. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy ; and, lo, the star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him ; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Herod awaited the return of the Magi ; and they, when they had discovered what they sought, hesitated to inform the king, whose perfidious designs they perceived. A dream, wherein they recognised the will of God, having decided them not to return to him, they departed to their own country by another way, probably by the south of the Dead Sea.

The visit of these religious sheiks, their munificence, their homage, their faith, must have reflected some glory on the poor dwelling of Joseph, and caused wonder that strangers so richly accompanied had come so far to see a child of the people. In the East all takes place openly ; rumours would run from house to house through the little town of Bethlehem ; no doubt the names of Messiah and Saviour were on every lip, and Joseph must have been somewhat fearful ; for the cruelty and craft of Herod were known to all the Jews.

Indeed, a storm was about to burst. Surprised that the Magi did not return, and feeling his schemes outwitted, Herod was furious. With the soul of a courtier, base and cringing before his masters, the Romans, he was imperious and harsh towards his subjects. Anger was one of the vices of this mistrustful nature ; it could only grow calm in satiety, and was only satiated in blood. He employed slaughter rather than banishment ; when any threatened to attack his power, he answered by death. Murder was the means by which he reigned.

When he saw that all Jerusalem was moved by the thought

of a Deliverer who was born, the old despot at once resolved to seize and put him to death. But his satellites tried in vain to discover the child. Bethlehem was the object of secret search ; the violence of Herod grew with failure ; he did not shrink from radical and revolting measures. He who had marked by murder almost every year of his reign, who just before his death caused the murder of his own son ; who, when he saw his end approaching, and believing that none would lament at his funeral, ordered the massacre of the principal generals in the district of Jericho ; now commanded the massacre of all the children at the breast in Bethlehem and the country round about. He was the typical example of an angry and ferocious tyrant. The hill where Rachel had been buried was stained with blood and wet with tears ; the cries of the mothers filled the valleys. It is necessary to have seen Eastern mourning, to have heard the cries and sobs round newly-opened graves, in order to imagine the distress of the women who refused to be comforted because their children were not. Herod, after the murder of the sucklings of Bethlehem, might sleep in peace ; he thought he had stifled in blood the increasing hopes of the people ; but he was deceived.

Herod succeeded only in tracing a bloody aureole round the cradle of Jesus ; who was thus escorted by a spotless band of martyrs. Others by thousands were to follow these slaughtered innocents ; the path of Christ across humanity is a way of blood ; all who would follow the Crucified are devoted, like him, to deadly persecution in this world, where no one has been more opposed than God himself.

Jesus escaped from the wrath of Herod ; for after the wise men had departed, Joseph was warned of God. The same voice which had before spoken to him, in a dream, on the eve of his marriage, now spoke again : " Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt."

The flight into Egypt not only saved the threatened life of Jesus, but began to spread around and over him the silence and peace which were never again to be broken until the day of his great strife. The star of the wise men disappeared, the voices of the prophets were still, heaven was veiled, the

humble family lost in the crowd ; the father and mother alone kept, as a hidden treasure, the mystery of Jesus.

The following year, 750-751, Herod died ; but Joseph, established with his own people in the Jewish colony of Memphis, was in no haste to return to Judaea. Warned by inspiration to go back to the land of Israel, he left Egypt with the child and his mother ; but learning that Archelaus, the new king of Judaea, continued the oppressive and impious policy of his father, he judged it prudent not to remain there.

It was revealed to Joseph in a dream that he was to retire to Galilee ; he returned therefore to Nazareth, where he took up his abode. In this little province, so despised by the Jews that it was proverbially incapable of producing anything good, Jesus grew, unknown. He was to be called a Nazarene, a name recalling an idea and expression familiar to the prophets when they spoke of the Messiah : " Behold the man," said Zechariah, " whose name is The Branch ; " and Jeremiah had already said : " I will raise up to David a righteous Branch," and Isaiah, first of all, had seen " A Branch grow out of the roots of Jesse."

And, indeed, not out of the roots of Jesse and David, but out of the roots of the human race, no Branch ever flourished like unto Jesus of Nazareth.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS. HIS EDUCATION

THE life of Jesus as a child and youth at Nazareth is comprised in two words: he grew and obeyed; he obeyed his father and mother; he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. There is nothing extraordinary, nothing marvellous, nothing apparently which transcends the laws of human nature. His physical development was like that of all children, and, from year to year, he showed the intelligence and virtue, the power and charm belonging to his age. No obstacles stood in the way of his perfect growth; when the passions wake they are tumultuous and unruly, so as to trouble the harmony of man's being, but in the soul of Jesus they were duly balanced. Evil, in any form, did not even touch him who was born holy, and in whom dwelt all the fulness of God.

Jesus was brought up, like all the Galilaeans of his age, in the little town of Nazareth. As a child he took part in childish games; as a young man he had to mix with his companions, and live their life; he astonished them by his wisdom, goodness radiated from him, the charm of sweet and humble souls.

Domestic education among the Jews was exclusively religious and patriotic, and concentrated on the Law, morals, and history; its intention was to form the conscience and engrave upon it the Law of God, fidelity to its precepts and love of the nation; it was honoured and obeyed among this people, which more than any other adhered to tradition. By domestic education, patriotism was kindled in the soul of the child; from the heart of the father and mother it drew, with the fear of God, the knowledge of the divine commands, and was initiated into the religious spirit of Israel and its great destinies.

Education was imposed on parents as a sacred duty. The first-born child was for them the first-fruits of the father's

strength, and a sign of God's blessing; a family without children seemed to them neglected or accursed; hence there was a tie between parents and children which has given to Israelitish families a consistency unknown to the Gentiles. The Roman had the right of killing, disinheriting, and abandoning his children; the Jew was bound by his religion to watch over the greatest interest of the family and the nation, which held their glory to consist in the number and the piety of their descendants.

The dwelling in which Jesus grew up was like those of the Arabs in Palestine at the present day. The type of the Oriental house has not changed for centuries; it is square, of brick or stone, the walls are often only of concrete, covered with stiff clay, sun-dried and whitewashed.

The house has but one or two rooms, and often no other opening than the door; in front is a narrow court, surrounded by a wall of loose stones, or dry faggots. In one of the angles of the court, near the door, is the baking-oven, a little round building of clay, closed by a movable cover; and the pebbles on which the dough is spread form the base.

The furniture is primitive; a few stools, a table, cushions strewed along the wall, mattresses and mats, a chandelier, an oil-lamp in a corner of the wall, a large coffer for linen and clothes, a meal-tub, a few urns, and a basalt mortar for the grain. The chimney, or rather the hearth, is sometimes placed in the middle of the room; at the door of each dwelling is a little oblong box, the "Mezuzzah," enclosing a roll of parchment on which are written two portions of the Law, taken from Deuteronomy.

The carpenter's shop was the first and true school of Jesus; there he grew up beside his father and mother, learned of them to read the Scriptures, and heard from their mouth the precepts of the Law and the history of his people. This child, who felt and knew himself to be the Son of the Heavenly Father, deigned to receive from an earthly father and mother the orders and instructions of God, and to be initiated, like all children, into human life and knowledge.

Jesus was the first-born and only son of his mother; those whom the Gospel calls his brothers and sisters, were in fact his maternal cousins, whose father was Cleophas, and their mother, Mary, sister of the mother of Jesus; they were of the same family, the same tribe, the same blood as he,

and he lived in their midst. The relations of Jesus do not appear to have been aware of the hopes which rested on his head and shone in secret in the home of Joseph and Mary. After those great manifestations of God, shadow and mystery rested on the predestined youth, while, in submission to his human state, he followed all its laws. Faith alone, illuminated by ineffable memories and the daily spectacle of perfect virtue, showed the parents of Jesus that he was extraordinary and divine.

They recited the Psalms together, praying for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the nations, and Joseph and Mary must often have looked on the face of Jesus to read therein the designs of God, the stern ways which his wisdom would follow in the accomplishment of the great work. They loved them well, without yet knowing them ; God only gives his light at the moment ordained ; souls which live in him give themselves up to his Providence, repressing their eager desire, but waiting with calmness till the day of God shall dawn.

But, for us, this life of the holiest of all families, this mystery of Nazareth, remains concealed.

Jesus and his relatives were often present in the synagogue of Nazareth ; they came there on the Sabbath and the other appointed days ; as pious Israelites, they had to pray there in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. Those who wished to read the Law, were accustomed to sit before the press wherein the copies were kept, and the " Hasan " gave them the sacred roll. Probably Jesus came often in his youth to pray there and meditate on the word of God so full of him, and of which he alone was one day to reveal the mystery. Seated in the synagogue, his head veiled, the sacred rolls on his knees, he might read in the Scriptures his own destiny written beforehand by the prophets, might follow the evolution of the plan of God for mankind, to admire the work of salvation, and prepare himself in silence, unknown to all, to accomplish his Father's will.

We cannot understand his physiognomy and character, if, while we study his childhood and youth, we neglect the natural surroundings in the midst of which he grew. Man is attached to the soil of his birth by ties so strict as always to leave their impress.

Through long years he read in the country round Nazareth as though in the book of God ; there he admired the anemones,

the lilies, the tufts of asphodel, and the fig-tree which gave its first fruit in the spring ; there he saw the corn grow white, and the vine pruned in order that it might be more fruitful ; there the lost sheep and the flocks brought back to the fold ; there he saw the shy jackal gain its hole, the eagles and the vultures gathering to devour their prey ; there he saw the sun grow red at morning and evening, a sign of fair weather or of storm, and the torrents came down in flood-time to carry away the ill-built house.

The Gospel documents say nothing about the long years of Jesus at Nazareth. St. Luke has characterised their general outline by a few hints ; but it was the intention of God that his Christ should remain hidden.

One incident alone allows us to see what was passing in the soul and conscience of the youthful Jesus. The twelfth year marked a solemn period in the life of the young Israelite ; from that age he was treated as a man, he was responsible for his own acts, and ceased his pupilage ; he became a member of the community of Israel, and engaged himself to fulfil faithfully the commandments of the Law. The Roman put on the *toga virilis* at the age of fourteen ; the young Israelite had already become the son of the Torah ; he began to bear the phylacteries on his forehead and arms, in religious ceremonies, according to the precepts of Moses ;[1] he had to fast on penitential days ; and at the great feasts, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Jesus had attained the age of twelve. He had been presented by his father in the synagogue at Nazareth, had become a member of the community, and the phylacteries[2] had been given to him, as to all those of his age, on the Sabbath-Tephillin. His parents, like all pious Jews, made each year, at the feast of the Passover, their journey to Jerusalem. He went with them ; as his first step in life after his years of childhood, and his first public act of submission to the Law.

It was the Passover of 760 or 762. The feast lasted eight days, from the 14th to the 21st of Nisan (April). The approaches to the Temple, the porches, and the courts were

[1] Deut. xi. 18.

[2] These were little parchment bands fastened by straps to the arms and head, with two passages from Deut., vi. 4-5 ; xi. 1-21 ; and two others, from Exodus, xiii. 1-10, 11-16.

encumbered by the multitude which came to pray and offer sacrifice to Jehovah. The priests immolated the victims; the people cried aloud for the redemption of Israel: the doctors, the Pharisees, and the scribes discussed the Law, commented on its precepts, and taught their traditions.

Jerusalem, at that time, was not only the city of worship, but one of the great centres of religious knowledge. Two opposite schools divided men's minds; that of Hillel and that of Shammai; the one, the more tolerant and liberal, exalted the moral portion of the Law, and declared it more important than the ritual; the other, narrow and scrupulous, laid stress upon the letter, and wished to impose it upon all, exaggerating by a thousand details the weary burthen of the Mosaic tradition.

The arrival of rabbis from a distance would increase the animation of the opposing doctors and their disciples; the ardent and bitter discussions, under the Porch of the Gentiles, at "Beth-Midrash," where the masters came together.

Probably at the very place where stands the basilica built by Justinian in honour of the Virgin Mary, occurred the events of which St. Luke preserves the record. The feast was ended; the caravans were quitting Jerusalem; that of the Nazarenes, in which were the parents of Jesus, was on the way towards Samaria. It had arrived at the first stage, Bireh, not far from Bethel, where Jacob had the vision of the mysterious ladder, and where Samuel came every year to judge the people. In the evening Joseph and Mary perceived that Jesus was not with them in the caravan. They returned to Jerusalem seeking him; and, after three days, they found him in the Temple, at the "Beth-Midrash," seated in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, asking them questions, and answering them; and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Those who know the manners of the East, and have seen the Jewish synagogues or the Moslem mosques, at the hour of teaching, will not wonder at this scene. A circle is made round the doctors, all sit on mats, listening, asking, answering, by turns; young and old are seated side by side, the teachers and the disciples with their legs crossed, on the same carpet, and all may speak. History does not tell us, but we may easily guess the questions of Jesus and his answers.

He who was to proclaim himself as the Son of God and

the expected Messiah, to preach the Sermon on the Mount, to show the emptiness of Jewish observances, to bring to all the Spirit of Salvation, must have showed some ray of the infinite wisdom with which he was filled. If human genius always reveals itself, the divine wisdom of Christ must have done the same. What is really surprising is the shade in which Jesus remained so long voluntarily hidden. And when they saw him thus admired by the most celebrated teachers and by the crowd, his parents " were amazed : and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me ? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? "

The mind of Jesus is revealed for the first time in this mysterious speech ; his whole self was there in its fulness, with his title of divine sonship, his sovereign initiative, his heavenly vocation ; his life, in its smallest detail, would be only the accomplishment of this that was spoken in his twelfth year. Neither Mary nor Joseph understood all its depth. Jesus went down with them to Nazareth, where he resumed his humble and laborious existence, waiting for his manifestation, the call of God.

## CHAPTER V

### JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

THE year 27 was a sabbatical year. Agricultural life was suspended, men neither reaped nor sowed; the fields were fallow; the earth, herds, and herdsmen were all at rest. The fruits grew of themselves without cultivation, and belonged to the poor, who had thus a year of liberty, abundance, and joy. The synagogues were more frequented at the feast-days and at the hours of prayer; the roads to Sion were traversed by more numerous caravans, the pulpits of the doctors were more surrounded. Less absorbed by work, the crowd which in the East loves long conversations and life in the open air, gave itself up to all the religious and political preoccupations of which the ardour was on the increase.

It was then that John the Baptist revealed himself to the people. He did not appear in the public places nor at the gates of the town, he did not show himself at Jerusalem, in the squares of the Holy City nor under the porches of the Temple; the apostle remained the anchorite, under the sway of the Spirit in his desert, that Spirit of which he loved to declare himself the voice. He who has not seen the land where John the Baptist arose as a prophet can scarcely understand his rude speech, his bold images, his cry powerful as lion's roar.

John was of the race of prophets, and the greatest of all. Chosen from his mother's womb; the son of a priest, and of a priestly family, he did not grow up to succeed Zacharias in the Temple services. Custom may enchain common natures; those whom God predestines are swayed by the will of the Spirit. John certainly knew of his relationship to Jesus and Mary; it does not appear that he had ever seen him whose forerunner he was to be; but he had heard from the mouth of his mother how his own birth had been marked by divine signs, and he knew the future that was prophesied at his cradle. He lived and grew as a being set apart, a "Nazir";

no earthly influence was to touch his soul, dedicated to so high a mission.

He dwelt in the desert, listening to the inner voice of the Spirit, and growing strong by it ; the vigour of his inspiration lifted him above his time and surroundings. No prophet ever uttered more loudly than he the word which befits nations crushed by the justice of God, " Repent."

His whole life was a living sermon ; he was bound by no ties to the degenerate world to which he brought good tidings ; he did not quit the desert, he knew only the voice of God speaking to his conscience and that desolate nature which also spoke the language of God. His dress recalled that of his master Elijah : a tunic of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins ; his meat was locusts cooked on stones, and wild honey from the crevices of the rocks. He drank no wine, but quenched his thirst in the mountain brook ; like the prophets of the school of Elijah, he dwelt neither in the town nor in houses, but in the caves of the desert mountain.

A grotto, which was perhaps the first dwelling-place of his wandering life, is pointed out even at this day, to the west of Ain-Karim ; it is hollowed out of the live rock, on the eastern flank of the valley of Beit-Anina ; there is a fountain about two yards above the grotto, which waters everything around it ; the grass is green, the lemon trees are in flower, and a carob spreads its dark boughs ; the torrent, swollen in time of flood, murmurs at the bottom of the gorge. Opposite, on the western bank, is a little Arab village ; a spring has attracted a few fellahs to that place. A little to the left, half way up the hill, is a thicket of green trees, a venerated spot where, according to the tradition of the country, the bodies of the two valiant Maccabees, slain in fight, were for a while deposited. The spot is rough and naked ; the horizon walled in ; the traveller feels hemmed in by the two sides of the valley which almost meet, and it is necessary to look up to heaven, which as it overarches seems to enlarge the whole. The rocks, the torrent, the sombre valley, are fully in harmony with the austere person who dwelt there. The echo of that powerful voice which cried " God cometh ; prepare his ways ; repent," still sounds in the desert ; we seem to hear it above the roar of the wind and the murmur of the waters of Beit-Anina.

Places have their predestined fates ; and this place suited the genius of the prophet. John wandered through it from

north to south, from east to west ; his route lay by the roads from Engedi and the shores of the Dead Sea as far as Tayebeh, from the Grotto of Ain-Karim to the Jordan. He addressed his burning words to those who passed by in caravans ; he did not seek the crowd like the ancient prophets, but attracted them to him. Those who heard him were moved ; they returned to their town or village, stirred to the depths by the words of the solitary, and in telling what had so moved them they spread his name and awakened the curiosity of the people.

The first duty of John was to announce that the Kingdom of God was at hand. No word was more likely to strike and move ; to force the attention, and carry away men's minds. At that point of extreme tension to which the ardour of hope deferred, and the sadness of an overwhelming oppression had brought the Jews, the voice of the new prophet rang out like a cry of deliverance ; it marked a new and decisive page in the destinies of Israel, hope was over, and reality began to appear. The Pharisees, so often beaten and discouraged, looked sadly to the future ; and, seeing their hopes always deceived, they attempted to explain the delays of God. The more eager were excited, and aspired only to break the yoke of the Gentiles by armed rebellion. They proclaimed to the people that God would only come and his kingdom be established in the days that they should shake off this impious slavery.

John was free from the uncertainty of the one party and the fanaticism of the other. The Lord is at hand, he said, and comes to reign and judge. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Under this metaphorical and popular language he revealed the divine attributes of the Messiah, who with features at once consoling and terrible, consoling for those who were like the wheat, terrible for those empty and barren souls which he compared to chaff. His voice from time to time grew gentler, and he said of the Messiah : " All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

When the crowd asked where the Messiah was, he answered again : " There standeth one among you, whom ye know not ; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

At the appeal of the new prophet, moved by the vigour of his word and the clearness of his declaration, the entire nation rose. The desert was filled with his voice, the solitary ways were blocked by the crowd which came from all parts to seek and follow after the anchorite.

The sanctity of John shone through the whole of his being, and men saw in him one dedicated to God. The austerity of his life made him into a super-human person; his way to the conscience was open, no prophets before him had entered it more triumphantly. The seer in him was united to the reformer, and while the seer satisfied the hopes of the people, the reformer carried them with him and taught them the knowledge of salvation.

This knowledge, which consisted solely in the preparation for the Kingdom of Messiah, was summed up by him in two elements: one virtue, repentance; one rite, baptism accompanied by the confession of sins.

Now, in order that the work of God may be accomplished, man must share in it, must renounce his prejudice, his vice, his passions, evil in all its forms; what John called repentance was to confess sin and do penance. Without repentance no evolution is possible in good, no transformation of the soul. This is the universal law of moral progress, and had to be announced at the very time when Christ was to work out in the world the highest evolution and the supreme transformation of mankind. It was the honour of John to have formulated this with a power which nothing can equal, at a moment unparalleled in history.

To his doctrine of repentance he added a rite which was to be its symbol and public profession. In the East, especially, nothing connected with religion is accomplished without a visible sign which speaks to the senses and strikes the imagination. In instituting his baptism, John was certain to find himself in harmony with the temperament and customs of his people, and to give to his action a new power. The baptism of John was a solemn profession of penitence, a sign of an inward ablution, and that purity of conscience without which the Kingdom of God can neither be received nor founded. No doubt it was only inspired by the very vocation of the prophet; who came from God and imposed it as a duty on all those who awaited in righteousness the advent of Messiah.

After having wandered some time in the desert, preaching his doctrine, and calling the crowd to his baptism, John descended to the plain of the Jordan and the banks of the river. "Make ready," he repeated incessantly, "prepare ye the way of the Lord." He compared the soul to the desert which he traversed, hinting that God was about to enter the sterile and desolate soul. A road must be opened for him. "Make his paths straight," he cried, not winding and stony, as those by which we come; "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low;" you who are discouraged and cast down, raise yourselves; ye who are vain and proud, become low. Let your will be right and pure, your soul serene and rightly balanced, then you will see the "Salvation of God." By this word he designated the Messiah.

His searching exhortations inspired repentance; crowds came to make public confession of their sins and to wash themselves in sign of penitence, in the waters of Jordan. Disciples gathered round the Baptist, repeated his teachings, and aided his ministry. Like all religious teachers he taught them how to pray, laid upon them very severe fasts, and called them to penitence and sacrifice. These were men sprung from the people, whose life, become austere in the school of their master, presented a very fervent model of Jewish piety.

The austere reformer grew gentle as he preached to the humble; his counsels breathed peace. He spoke of righteousness to the tax-gatherers and said: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? "And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. And to all he said, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."[1]

His indignation against hypocrisy and pride showed itself with implacable vigour; he one day saw mingled with the crowd many Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, and could not contain himself, discovering hidden in the one their false piety, and in the others scepticism and Epicurean luxury. He recognised in them those envenomed tongues which dropped among the people the poison of false doctrines concerning the Kingdom of God, the expected Messiah,

holiness and righteousness. His conscience was roused. "O generation of vipers," he said, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." In seeing the religious pride with which they resisted God and his justice, he added: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

John shook Jewish society too violently to escape the suspicion of the Sanhedrin. The great assembly considered itself as the guardian of the Law, and called before its tribunal all who dared touch upon religious questions without its authority: it was excited by the extraordinary influence of the Baptist. The rude eloquence with which he had belaboured the doctors and laid bare the vices of the aristocracy was the determining occasion of the action taken against him. Had John preached in the towns, or come to Jerusalem, he would have been arrested and condemned; it was judged enough to send an embassy to the anchorite, with power to interrogate him on the mission he claimed. The envoys were priests and Levites, among the most rigid of the Pharisaic party.

"Who art thou? Art thou Elias?" they asked of John. In his sincerity, without allowing himself to be uplifted by the applause of the multitude, he answered: "I am not Elias." "What then?" said the messengers. "Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." Those sent were not satisfied. The contentious spirit of the Pharisees raised a legal question: "Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not Elias, nor the Christ, nor one of the prophets?"

John said to them with that clearness which dissipates all uncertainty, and brings light into the heart of questions however confused by foolish subtleties: There are two baptisms, of water and of the Spirit. "I baptize with water," Christ with the Spirit. Christ is among you, and ye know him not. Then repeating solemnly what he had already said

to the multitude, he added : " He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's lachet I am not worthy to unloose."

We do not know the result of this attempt of the Sanhedrin ; the prophet continued his penitential baptism without disturbance ; increasing popular favour rendered him inviolable. It is difficult to lay hands on those whom God and the people guard and protect.

Whatever success his mission might have among his fellow-citizens, however powerful the religious movement he initiated, the prophet understood that his work would only attain its highest point on condition that he might see and show to the people the expected Messiah, the founder of the Kingdom of God. He had come baptizing with water, only in order to manifest him to Israel. His eyes sought for him, his presentiments called to him, but how should he know him, and what sign would reveal him ? An inner voice of the Spirit which possessed him, even from the womb of his mother, which lived with him in the desert, and placed in his mouth the burning words at which all Israel had thrilled, said to him : " He on whom thou shalt see the Spirit of God descend is he who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost." And John waited for that Holy One, as yet unknown.

About the end of the year 27, perhaps in the first days of the year 28, Galilee, like all the other provinces, was filled with the name of John the Baptist ; the people of Galilee, under the impulse which carried all the Jews with it, came in their turn to ask for baptism. This was for Jesus the hour of God. The carpenter of Nazareth was thirty years old ; he joined the caravans of his country and descended into the valley of Jordan.

The road which leads from Nazareth to the river ford where John was preaching, is twenty-five leagues in extent.

The place was full of religious memories and carried the imagination back to the greatest of the judges, and one of the greatest of the prophets. There the Israelites had crossed the Jordan dry-foot, and entered with Joshua into the promised land ; there the prophet Elijah, accompanied by Elisha his disciple, smote the stream with his mantle and opened a passage through its rapid waters. The ford is called at the present day Maktha, or " place of passage," which corresponds

well to Bethany, the " house of the boat," or Bethabara, " the house of the passage," of St. John.

Thither came Jesus, lost in the crowd. John knew him not, but as Jesus approached a sudden vision revealed him. Above the head of Jesus, John saw the heavens open ; and the Spirit of God, under the bodily form of a dove, descending and lighting upon him.

This was the expected sign. John then understood that which no human knowledge, no genius could teach him ; he must needs experience one of those unspeakable emotions which show that God is there. He saluted Jesus of Nazareth, and refused to baptize him, saying, " I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

The depth of these words is the guarantee of their authenticity ; they throw an unexpected light on the soul of Jesus, they show that he had a perfect knowledge of his Messianic vocation, and that in submitting to the rite instituted by John, he already began to realise it. John obeyed and baptized him. Jesus was dipped in the water of Jordan. Scarcely had he risen from the water, and as he was praying apart from the crowd, the vision which had dazzled the Baptist was reproduced for Jesus himself. " The heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This act inaugurated the public life of Jesus, revealed his nature, his divine calling, all his destiny and the power which was to lead him.

At the moment when this submission was begun, and in virtue of that act, the heavens were opened. The very life of God impenetrable and indescribable, closed to every creature, that life from which mankind, crushed by evil, could no longer draw nourishment, showed itself taking possession of the soul of one of its children. The being predestined and unknown on whom God visibly descended was not only what he appeared to be, a son of man, but also the Son of God. The Spirit which dwelt in him, unsuspected, revealed itself solemnly and consecrated him before the eyes of the multitude ; henceforward the Messiah could act.

The fact of the baptism of Jesus remained profoundly

engraven in the memory and conscience of his disciples. It was called the " anointing " of Jesus ; the primitive apostolic teaching, as the Acts have preserved it to us, speaks of it as a wondrous sign in which we are to recognise the divine justification of the Messiah. Jesus almost immediately left the place and disappeared, avoiding the curious throngs of people that flocked to the banks of the Jordan ; the Spirit which filled him led him to the wilderness.

## CHAPTER VI

### JESUS IN THE DESERT. THE TEMPTATION

THE Gospel narratives do not precisely define the desert into which Jesus was led by the Spirit. It is certain, however, that the word ἔρημος employed by them, with the article, in the singular, and without an epithet, can only mean the desert of Judah. The most ancient tradition has always sought for and venerated the traces of Jesus in the wild and mountainous region which extends to the west above Jericho as far as the heights of Bethany, is bounded on the south by the Wady-el-Kelt, and on the north by the Wady Neuahimeh.

The sojourn of Jesus in the desert was at first prayer, contemplation, and absorption of all his human faculties in God his Father. Those who have experienced rapture and ecstasy, who have drunk long draughts of divine happiness, and have heard, like St. Paul, "the secret words of heaven which no man on earth may utter": the saints, these only can see some rays from the soul of Jesus as they pray, contemplate, and adore. He saw, in the will of his Father, the greatness and beauty of his future mission; he measured its difficulties, foresaw its pains and sacrifices; on the eve of his active life, he entered into all the counsels of wisdom, justice, and infinite mercy, to save a lost world. His agony on Calvary and death revealed themselves to his eyes open to eternal light; he knew the emotions of the soul overflowing with the joys of God, and the anguish of a soul overwhelmed at the view of the frightful strife which awaited him.

The destiny of Jesus did not call him to delay long in the desert; he only halted there; he did not come as we come to seek for God, for God was ever with him; nor to listen for his word, for this he heard everywhere and at all times, at Nazareth as by the Jordan, in the midst of a crowd as in the silence of nature; nor to ripen his Messianic plans, for these were wholly fixed in the Spirit who was his light, his counsel, his impulsive force, always and fully obeyed.

The greatest among religious men go into the desert to

seek energy, Jesus retired there to show it; they seek solitude and peace, Jesus sought strife ; they ask in it a refuge against evil, Jesus came there to pray, to endure the assaults of Satan and to overcome him. He who had been proclaimed by God himself to be the Son of God, could not free himself from the sad conditions of humanity ; he had already made, in his baptism, a public profession of expiation and sacrifice, he was to submit himself to the law of trial, under a mysterious and difficult form which defies human reason and of which the historian must seek to perpetrate the enigma.

Jesus was fasting in the desert. For forty days and forty nights, like Moses and Elias, he neither ate nor drank, nor felt the pangs of hunger. All the needs of life were at rest. In a momentary freedom from this slavery, earth had no hold on him. None can tell to how great a degree of liberty, independence, and spiritual freedom, a soul absorbed by God may bring its own body. Time exists no longer for the spirit which God withdraws from all terrestrial things, from all which can change and perish, and steeps in his eternal light. However, after forty days and forty nights, Jesus became again subject to the law of mankind ; the Son of God gave place to the Son of Man ; he felt the need of restoring his forces, and was an hungered. Then the Tempter drew near.

He craftily seized the hour when Jesus felt human weakness, and as though to oblige him to reveal himself, said : " If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones," of which the desert was so full, " be made bread." It was a perfidious suggestion ; there was nothing more legitimate than the satisfaction of the primary need of every living creature, nor did it matter that the wilderness was uncultivated. If Jesus were the Son of God, God had only to command, and the stones would be transformed at his voice, God would hear the desire of his prophet and the rock would change to bread.

Jesus, with one sovereign word, repulsed the Tempter. " Man," he said, " doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He would obtain his food whence his Father pleased ; if it were his will that he should endure hunger, he would subdue the needs of his lower life ; the life-giving and creative word of God was able to replace bread and other food which was created to maintain life ; if it pleased God to feed him with his word, bread and created food was useless.

It would seem that when man has mastered his appetites, and ceases to rely on fragile matter, when strengthened by the indomitable will which rules and guides all things, he would be sheltered from satanic suggestion. It is not so ; evil can still intrude. The soul most submissive to God falls back on itself, and in its selfishness is capable of doubt and rashness, of failure or excessive confidence ; which is the ordinary rock of false prophets. They love vain show and seek to do marvellous acts ; they tempt God, making it as it were necessary to interfere for them, so that this intervention may prove to themselves that God upholds them. Here again we find that proud attempt to place God at the service of their empty thought and feeble will. Such selfishness, nakedly stated, is gross enough, but disguised as a feeling of unbounded trust, it seems a virtue, and puts on the airs of a close intimacy and familiarity with God ; a snare from which even the holiest souls do not always escape.

Such was the new assault of Satan against Jesus. He intended to use against him the superhuman power of spirits. Free from all bondage to matter, having power over weight and space, he carried Jesus to the summit of the Temple, the pinnacle of one of the porches, perhaps that above the courts, whence the valley of the Kedron is visible, or on the minaret, whence the priests announced the sunrise every morning, as soon as the sky grew light behind the mountains of Hebron.

" If thou art the Son of God," he said, " cast thyself down, for it is written, God has commanded his angels to bear thee in their hands that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone." This strange attempt might have ensnared the will of one distrustful or rash, for at the bottom of every soul there is a secret egoism, which, deceiving it about its own power, urges it forward to inconsiderate acts. But the confidence of Jesus in his Father was absolute, and he acted only under his impulse, nor would he undertake any act which implied a doubt in regard to God, or an excessive confidence in his own human energy. To this perverse imitation of Satan he answered, " Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Perhaps also the suggestion of Satan chimed in with the thoughts of Jesus, relative to his work as Messiah and the difficulties of its execution. Every nature, however well-balanced, recoils instinctively from difficulty, pain, and sacrifice. In his life Jesus often showed the depression into which

he was thrown by the mere sight of the cup which he had to drink. His mission would be shortened, if, using his power, he revealed himself by a wonderful sign. With what joy the people would salute him as the Messiah, if they saw him fall from the Temple, into the midst of the startled crowd, as if he had descended from heaven, full of power and majesty! Satan insinuated that the thing was easy, for God had ordered the angels to carry him in their hands. If thou art the Messiah, do not hesitate, make thy work easy, and dazzle the people by a sign. The answer of Jesus cut the root of the evil, and tore off the mask from the false interpretation of the great word of Scripture which shows so absolute a confidence in God.

The temptation of Christ was unfolded like a drama. After the scenes of the wilderness and the Temple, came the mountain. Jesus once more gave himself up to the spiritual power of the Tempter, and was carried to a high mountain, whence the devil showed him, in the four corners of the horizon, the kingdoms and empires of the world, unveiling their earthly glory before his eyes.

When Satan unfolded before Jesus what he called his empire, he endeavoured to flatter and threaten him; to flatter by unhealthy ambition, and threaten by showing the forces which Christ had against him, if they were not for him. He showed him the dream of the false Messiahship which possessed the Jewish imagination, and whose seduction very few spirits, even among the loftiest, the most cultured, active, and religious, could escape. Satan reigned over these by this dream, and by it he attempted to gain access to the soul of Jesus.

"See," he said to him, "I am the master, I give all this to whom I will," but in order to possess such a power, it is necessary to have the spirit of evil, of deceit, violence and selfishness; let us make an alliance; worship this spirit, and "all shall be thine." Jesus submitted neither to the attraction of ambition nor to the fear of the adversary, with one strong word he repulsed that sacrilegious counsel: "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

He had but one Master, he knelt before one only Lord, he knew no other alliance than union with his Father. The smallest compromise with the evil spirit is the negation of

his Messianic work, whose supreme aim is to withdraw every free creature from bondage to evil, and to submit it, in righteousness, to the will of God.

Jesus, after these sad hours, was sensible of divine joys: "The angels came," says the Gospel, "and ministered unto him"; the spirits of God were always at his command; they withdrew in the moment of temptation, and at the will of their Master; but Satan once repulsed they reappeared. Intermediaries between man and God, these heavenly messengers bring us the power and joy of God as aether transmits the light and heat of the sun through space.

Jesus lived accompanied by their invisible host, he saw them watching from on high over little children, he knew that they were ready to serve him, by them he wrought his deeds of mercy and power, by them he healed the sick, expelled demons, converted sinners, fed the multitude; and yet, even when he might have done so, he did not ask his Father to send their faithful legions to his succour; he lived in self-forgetfulness, without ever mitigating the burthen of our human nature of which he had taken on him all the sorrow. For him, as for us, life is composed of sorrows and joys, terrible trials and intoxicating triumphs. Joys are short, a brief truce in the midst of strife, but enough to keep our will exercised. Born of trials, they increase with trial; they are balm and oil; they heal the sores of the wounded soul, and are unction to the athlete to prepare his limbs for more strenuous combat. Those who have experienced the consolation, serenity, and holy emotions which God has infused into the soul of his martyred servants, will realize the full meaning of the words which close the account of the temptation of Jesus.

The baptism and temptation succeeded each other in fact as in the narrative of the evangelists. These two inseparable events which explain each other by contrasts and comparison are the true introduction to the life of Christ. The first was the manifestation of the Spirit of God, the other that of the spirit of evil; the first shows us the divine sonship of Jesus, the other, his human nature, dedicated to strife and trial; one reveals to us the infinite force with which he was to act, the other, the obstacles which he must overcome; the one teaches us his inner life, the other, the law of his action.

These two spirits are at work in each man and in all man-

kind, and by their incessant strife cause the great tumult of history. Jesus possessed the former in all its fulness, and was the absolute enemy of the other. His constant aim is to secure in man the triumph of the spirit of good, and the defeat of the spirit of evil. Whoever will obey the former must receive it from Christ, and whoever will conquer the second must ask power from him. Such is the greatness of Jesus, according to the witnesses of his life, those who have sketched it, at the outset of its career, in these two sacred scenes.

Jesus is without equal among the sons of men; for no other is the "Son of God," and no other escapes the attempts of evil. He is our type and our strength; we must strive to be like him, and can only conquer by him. His divine sonship and his absolute sanctity thus shine forth at the outset of his career, lighting up the whole mystery of his work, deep as the designs of God, vast as humanity, austere and heroic as the sacrifice it demanded from its author.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BEGINNING OF THE PUBLIC LIFE

The beginning of the public life of Jesus embraces a period of fourteen to fifteen months, from the day when he left the wilderness, a little before the Passover of the year 28, to the imprisonment of John the Baptist, about the feast of Purim in the year 29. The three first Gospels make this last event, which finished the mission of the Forerunner, the starting-point of the apostolate of Jesus, and of their own narrative. They are silent about the earlier phase which their history presupposes, it would be totally unknown to us if the author of the fourth Gospel had not, in completing the accounts of his predecessors, told us certain striking facts which marked its character. According to his plan, he shortly indicates the various journeys of Jesus, fixes the hours and days, recalls at length intimate conversations which seem to have been held with him alone, since he alone recorded them. In these pages the narrative is evidently personal; the soul of Jesus breathes through the authors, he always effaces himself, not even naming himself, and we hear, not himself, but his Master.

John the Baptist, by his energy and his roughness, reminds us of that violent wind which, in Elijah's vision on Horeb went before the passage of Jehovah, tearing the mountains and breaking the rocks. Jesus was the still small voice, the very breath of God. His first manifestations were full of calmness and peace, gentleness and reserve; with one single exception, there is nothing either vehement or remarkable in his action.

After his fast and temptation in the wilderness he returned alone to the banks of the Jordan, in the neighbourhood of Bethabara, where John, since he had baptized him, bore witness to him without ceasing. His meeting with Jesus, the view of the opened heavens, the voice of the Father, and the visible descent of the Spirit on Messiah, had given greatness to

the prophet ; who was no longer only the austere preacher of repentance, the stern ambassador of the justice of God, the zealous Baptist, but the first evangelist of the new time. That which the prophets, his ancestors, had perceived from afar, he saw and touched, and published ; the light of God revealed to him its mystery, and he ceased not to proclaim it to the multitude.

One day John saw Jesus coming towards him from out of the shifting crowd. It was after the fast in the wilderness and the temptation. Jesus perhaps appeared overwhelmed by the sadness of his heroic mission. The prophet, who thought only of him as he pointed him out to those standing by, cried, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Such was the first name given to Jesus on his entry into public life ; no other expressed so well the outward form and the inward character of him who, dedicated by God to sacrifice, had said to John, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

The great conscience of John, who had so vigorously denounced the corruption of the world, and preached repentance in such urgent tones, now understood where true righteousness abode ; and the same man who, in the light of God, had seen the terrible truths of judgment, now saw, in yet brighter light, the innocent victim who was to atone for and purify mankind.

He stripped the veil from the Pharisees, who had so long deceived themselves about the practices of their law and their empty righteousness. He seemed to say to them, " Not the blood of your lambs, sacrificed twice each day in the Temple on the altar of sacrifice, can purify the people ; the true Lamb is here." And taking up again his favourite theme, he constantly repeated his declarations concerning Jesus, like a man absorbed by one thought, one irresistible conviction. He said to the multitude, pointing out Jesus to them, " Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."[1]

These constant and eager declarations unveiled the soul of the Forerunner, and proved the resistance which his words encountered in the hardened hearts of the people. Whatever was the ascendancy gained by John the Baptist, it does not

[1] John i. 33-34.

seem that his doctrine of the Messiah had reached the conscience of the Jewish people, nor uprooted their Messianic prejudices, but it must at least have touched some simple souls, and it finally drew, little by little, the attention of all to the Elect of God, whom no visible sign pointed out for the admiration of the crowd.

The scene of the baptism and those great things concerning Jesus which the prophet said, only served to render the mystery of the Kingdom more impenetrable. It was not clear how this humble workman of Galilee, this Nazarene, could be the Messiah, the hope and salvation of Israel. Jesus had not declared himself; the crowd passed by him, marvelling or distracted, curious and ignorant; they gazed, but perhaps failed to understand.

Meantime Jesus had not left the banks of the Jordan. On another day he was walking by the river at sunset, when the multitude had dispersed, and John was there with two of his disciples. Looking at the Saviour as he walked, the same impression that had seized him the evening before again came upon him, and drew from him the same cry, "Behold the Lamb of God."

The word of John was heard by the two disciples; the tones of their master moved them, the sight of Jesus drew them, they left their master and followed Jesus. "Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour."

One word clearly shows us that Jesus exercised a profound charm upon his two guests; his word enlightened them; they believed in his person and in his mission. In fact the next morning, one of them, Andrew, also a Galilaean and a fisherman on the lake of Tiberias, went to seek his brother. His enthusiasm passed all bounds, and he needed someone to share it. As soon as he met Simon, his brother, he said, "We have found the Messias;" and he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him keenly and said: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." In giving to the new-comer this name

which foretold so much, he designed to appropriate him at once, and marked him with a sign ; he allowed the son of Jonas to see how deeply he read his mind, but without yet revealing to him the destiny covered by this mysterious name.

It was enough for Peter to feel himself bound to him who began to show himself to them as the Christ.

At the bottom of the Jordan, valley, hollowed like an immense furrow, under the burning sky, at the very place where the word of John the Baptist leavened the conscience of Israel, we catch the first radiance, and see the first development of the Messianic power of Jesus. He had now three disciples. On the afternoon of the day on which he had called Peter to him, he looked towards Galilee, which he had not seen since his baptism, and desired to return there. He was on the way, when he met another Galilaean, Philip, a countryman of Andrew and Peter, inhabiting, like them, the little village of Bethsaida, on the shores of the lake. Jesus drew him by the simple words, " Follow me." The call of Jesus has something at once gentle and irresistible ; it touches and attracts the heart ; Philip shared the dawning faith and enthusiasm of his companions, and meeting a certain Nathanael, the son of Tolomeus, he said to him : " We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The name of Nazareth gave offence to Nathanael, as he asked with rough frankness : " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? "

Galilee, because there was a mixture of Gentiles with the Jewish population, was despised by ardent Pharisees. " Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," they said ; the word has passed into a proverb, and Nazareth, an obscure town, unknown in the Scripture, was the particular object of this pious contempt of the orthodox. Philip, in the first ardour of his faith, and yet under the charm of Jesus' words, did not try to refute Nathanael ; deeds have more effect than words ; it was enough to say, " Come and see."

" Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou was under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

The narrative gives us clearly to understand that Jesus' powers of knowledge were not tied to the normal conditions of

presence and external sign. Jesus had seen Nathanael from afar and divined his most intimate thoughts. He was reading, or perhaps praying, seated under the fig-tree, according to Jewish custom. The prophet allowed him to see, although the narrative says nothing of it, that he had read his conscience. From that moment he did not argue ; as great in his faith as he had been sincere in his objection, he cried, " Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel." Jesus was touched by this straightforward answer. " Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these." Then, turning to Nathanael, but addressing all, and using a formula which he employed when he would instruct his disciples on the things of God : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."[1] Mysterious words, full of infinite hope. Jesus knew that no man could grow great without hope, and he allowed this hope to shine before the eyes of his new disciples.

Since Jesus had quitted Nazareth to receive the baptism of John some serious events had taken place. God himself had manifested himself in him, and consecrated his Elect before the face of all people. The new prophet, whose influence all felt, to whose action all submitted, had publicly pointed him out as Messiah and the Son of God. Although he seemed, in retiring to the desert, to flee from the sight and throngs of men, it was not possible but that his name should have filled Palestine, and passed from mouth to mouth in that Jewish society which was thrilled at the very idea of the advent of Messiah.

When Jesus returned to Galilee, followed by a few unknown disciples, his reputation had preceded him ; but the little town of Nazareth did not welcome the popular reports, which were loud in the praise of the carpenter's son, as he was called. Even later, when Jesus had justified his mission by signs and wonders, his obscure origin, his station as an artisan, and his unlettered condition, remained a scandal to the Nazarenes. Envy, jealousy, all the mean passions and little prejudices of the village, were to blind them to the end ; for all that narrows the heart closes the mind.

But if Jesus was misunderstood in the spot where his

[1] John i. 51.

infancy and youth had passed, he must have been received with great emotion by his mother, when she saw him whom she had borne and nursed, at the very time when he was now at last about to realise all her mother's hopes, which had been so long buried in her heart. No one better than she understood their mystery; indeed, her only occupation was to follow her son, with those women who were to minister to him and accompany him in his journeys; but in spite of the shadow into which she was to withdraw, his words, acts, and intentions, in fact the whole life of Jesus, his sorrows and his triumphs, were to find in no other creature a more ardent acceptance, a more faithful echo.

The Gospel gives us some information of the road by which Jesus and his first disciples went up from the valley of Jordan to Galilee, whether he went to Nazareth by way of Scythopolis, or direct to Cana. The distance between Bethabara and Cana is more than twenty-five leagues; the journey of Jesus must have been rapid, for the third day after the call of Philip, we find him in the little town of Cana, where his mother had preceded him. She was there, in the house of relatives or of friends.; perhaps, after the departure of her son for his baptism, she had left Nazareth and sought their hospitality. We may suppose from the silence about Joseph, her husband, that she had become a widow, and, since her loss, had lived alone with Jesus. On Joseph's side she had many kinsfolk; and it is very likely that, in her solitude, she had been received by some of her relatives.

The name of the little town is carefully pointed out by the fourth Gospel, which calls it Cana in Galilee to distinguish if from another Kana in the neighbourhood of Tyre. Eusebius has confounded the two. It is situated two hours' journey from Nazareth, on the road to Tiberias, not far from the highway between Ptolemais and the cities on the lake of Gennesareth. It was not without some importance, if we may judge by the extent of the ruins which cover the hill on the slope of which it is built. It is now only a miserable village, a heap of poor cottages; but Jesus has immortalised it by staying there. The remembrance of him has survived its overthrow; there, as elsewhere, a poor church, reared on the ruins of St. Helena's basilica, witnesses, after nineteen centuries, to the unfailing vitality of the words and deeds of Jesus.

On the very evening that the Master arrived there a marriage was celebrated in one of the houses at Cana ; and, according to the Jewish custom, even among the lower classes, such feasts lasted for several days. Jesus was invited with his disciples ; the house was full of guests ; for Eastern hospitality knows no bounds. It is not, however, the custom that women should take their place at table ; they remain apart from the men, preparing the food, and overlooking the service, but they come and go in the guest-chamber. One circumstance gave some troube at the end of dinner. They had no more wine, which, as says Bossuet, is called " the soul of banquets." Perhaps Mary had supplied the wine herself, for it was the custom among the Jews, when invited to a nuptial feast, to bring food as presents, wine and oil and fruits. The guests were numerous, the provisions gave out. Mary saw the embarrassment of the newly-wedded pair, and in her anxious eagerness, thought at once of her son. She came to him and said, " They have no wine."

The answer of Jesus leads us to believe that other feelings were in her heart, that she thought of the glorious words which had been said of her Son, that she wished him to seize this occasion to manifest his power, that she let him see by her looks and gestures all that was in her mind. He, always master of himself, and calm with the calmness which nothing earthly disturbed, gently put aside his mother, moderated her eagerness and her charity, and with the gravity of one who, in his divine mission, never obeyed any earthly motive or sentiment, but his Father alone, he said : " Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come." These words recall those of his twelfth year, when he said to his mother, sorrowful at having lost him and reproaching him for having left her, " Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? "

A mother's heart is seldom at fault, and in spite of the affectionate reproof of her son, Mary did not lose confidence, she understood that her wish was fulfilled, and in calm reliance on the bounty of him who could refuse her nothing, and sure of him as she was of herself, she said to the servants, " Do whatever he shall command you."

" And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with

water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was : but the servants which drew the water knew ; the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine ; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

The disciples of Jesus were struck with this miracle ; it was the first time that their Master had revealed to them his power ; they thought of those mysterious words which he had said to them a few days before, in allusion to the miracles with which his life was filled, and they felt their faith in him increase.

I have kept in this narration the simplicity, liveliness, and richness of detail which the faithful pen of St. John has given to it ; there was nothing more ordinary in appearance than this wedding feast in a little Galilaean town, but the presence of Jesus has transfigured it, and it has remained in Christian memory, as a symbol, which allows the faithful to see in it ineffable mysteries. Jesus increased and immortalised all that he touched, his least acts were a living word which the ages were to keep and echo.

The Kingdom of God which he was to found is a wedding feast between God and mankind ; Christ is the eternal spouse who calls every human soul to his divine betrothal ; the water changed into wine is the image of that transformation of our nature by the virtue and the intoxicating power of the Spirit ; the woman, the mother who cried, " They have no wine," and appealed with confidence to Jesus, is the voice of all those who have felt the insufficiency of life, the weakness of mankind and of the whole creation, of those who have cried to God, and whose prayer God always heard at the chosen hour, but often too slowly for their own desire.

This miracle was done in secret. The master of the feast was not even aware of it. Jesus, in the early period of his public life, avoided all publicity, kept aloof from the crowd, and remained hidden in the intimate circle of his own people, his mother and his near friends. He had his disciples above all before his eyes. It was for them, the first who were

admitted into his familiarity, that he acted ; to them he revealed himself ; nothing shows better how fully he was in possession of his divine power than the gentleness and the infinite calm with which he carried out, without hasting and without resting, the will of his Father. In the peaceful beginning of his ministry, tranquil as the dawn of an Eastern day, there is no foreshadowing of the storm in which it closed.

Jesus remained but a short time at Cana, nor did he return to Nazareth, but went down to Capernaum, accompanied by his mother, his brethren, and his disciples. The little caravan traversed the villages of Magdala, of Bethsaida, and, towards the evening, arrived at Capernaum. Jesus found himself in the country of his disciples ; the families of John, of Andrew and Simon, and of Philip, lived at Bethsaida ; but Simon, a married man, had a house at Capernaum, which seems to have been the birthplace of his mother-in-law. We have no details of this first sojourn of Jesus ; its only aim was to strengthen the ties between the Master and his young disciples, and to prepare his future establishment ; there was no rumour about him in the town on the occasion of his coming.

Jesus had another thought : he looked towards Jerusalem and the Temple ; there, in the centre of the nation, in the chief city, before the people and the hierarchy, he was to show himself with power. A prophet, speaking of the Messianic times, had said, " Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire." John the Forerunner had opened the way : Christ the Lord could appear. A suitable occasion offered itself, the Passover of the year 28 was at hand, and pilgrims were forming themselves into caravans in every part of Galilee. Jesus took the road to Jerusalem which follows the valley of the Jordan, and set out with his disciples.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JESUS AT JERUSALEM AT THE PASSOVER OF THE YEAR 781. HIS FIRST APOSTLESHIP IN JUDAEA.

THE journey from Capernaum to Jerusalem requires five or six stages ; but we know nothing of the incidents which marked it. He did not travel unperceived as when, in former days, he joined the Galilaean caravans on their way to celebrate the Passover. His renown was spreading far and near ; as men saw him, followed by his disciples, they said, " This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth." The attention of the crowd was attracted as he passed by. Of all kinds of curiosity, that which is concerned with religious sentiment is the most lively in the East ; thus, even before his revelation was complete, Jesus, announced to the people by the voice of John, went on his way as though surrounded by an aureole.

On his arrival at Jerusalem he went direct to the Temple ; and must have entered by the gate of Susa, which opened upon the valley of Kedron, and was the first in the way of pilgrims coming from the Mount of Olives ; it gave admission into Solomon's Porch and the Court of the Gentiles, which was called the First Temple.

At the approach of the great feasts, and of the Passover above all, the crowd pressed under these vast galleries : there was a noisy and tumultuous coming and going. The money-changers had their tables there, and, since all which was needed for the ablutions and sacrifices could only be bought with sacred money, here was the exchange for Gentile money, and, in violation of the law, this exchange was made a matter of profit. The dealers occupied a part of the court, and thither were brought, into pens as of a slaughter-house, whole flocks of oxen, bulls and goats, sheep and lambs. The sellers of doves had their stalls by the side of those shops where salt, oil, incense, and everything necessary for the altar service, was sold. The cries of the animals mixed with the noise of the crowd, the voice of the dealers with the eager disputes of the

Pharisees and Sadducees. Usury, venality, and the sharp desire for gain, corrupted the most holy things, engendered revolting and scandalous abuses, and often found accomplices amongst those very people who ought to have been incorruptible judges, inexorable censors. The masters, the rabbis, had many fine sayings on the respect due to the Temple : " Let no one enter there," they said, " with his beast, his shoes, or his purse, and without shaking the dust from his feet. Let none make the Temple a pathway, nor a place for spitting." Meanwhile, the exchange of money, the choice and purchase of animals destined for sacrifice, which ought to have been made outside the gates, took place in the sacred enclosure, in the very place of prayer. It became no longer a temple, but a market and a bazaar.

This sight must have often angered Jesus, and he had suffered in silence ; but to-day the time for action had come. He gave free course to his zeal and sacred anger, and, gathering together the cords which served to tie the animals, he made a scourge and set himself to cast out of the Temple all the traders with their sheep and oxen ; then he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and said to those who sold doves in the name of the family of the high priests : " Take these things hence ; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

His power was irresistible, and all obeyed it ; in seeing him his disciples recalled the expression of a popular psalm, which said of the Messiah : " The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." There was, indeed, something divine in this act of holy vigour. One man, alone, scarcely known, with a scourge in his hand, without official authority, who thus cast out the merchants with their animals, while none resisted him, either the crowd or the servants of the Temple, or their soldiers, such an one showed a grandeur and an energy worthy of God ; he did not do this simply in the name of order, but as a prophet, as a reformer, as Messiah ; he did not act simply as a messenger of God, but as a master ; he treated the dwelling-place of Jehovah as his own : it was the habitation of his Father, from which he had a right to drive all that troubled and dishonoured it.

As soon as the first moment was over, Jesus was pointed out to those who were the guardians of the Temple. They came to him and said : By what right dost thou forbid that

which the priests allow? What sign dost thou show to make thy violence legitimate? Jesus answered by one of those mysterious sayings which those who spoke with him did not always understand, but which revealed his prophetic intuition and which the future could alone verify. "Destroy this Temple," he said, pointing with his hand to his own breast, "and in three days I will raise it up." St. John, the eye-witness of the scene, must have remarked the gesture of Jesus, and in his account he is careful to add that the Master spoke of his body, the true temple where the Godhead dwelt in person, which the Jews, in fact, were to destroy, and which he himself was to raise from the dead. The Jews, misunderstanding the answer of Jesus, cried: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

This scene in the public life of Jesus marks the date of the first opposition that he excited. The conflict was henceforward open between himself and national and religious authority; it was inevitable and would be pushed to its natural results. The expulsion of the traders left such an impression that the mysterious words of Jesus, spoken on this occasion, brought about his condemnation; his enemies misrepresented it, and endeavoured to make it an accusation of a mortal crime; he was to be accused of having desired to destroy the Temple, and of giving himself out as able to rebuild it in three days.

However, the presence of Jesus at Jerusalem was not otherwise disturbed. He was present at the Passover, on the very day of the ceremony; he worked many miracles, but the historian of that time of his life does not give us the details. They were, as we shall see later, cures of every kind, for Jesus loved to reveal his mission by his benefits. The multitude thronged around him, and a great number who witnessed his miracles regarded him as the Messiah; but he hid himself from them, according to the express remark of the evangelist.

The influence of Jesus on this first journey was not limited to the popular class; it made its way among the rich, the doctors and priests; his name, his conduct, and his words were to be the object of lively discussion.

Those who awake the enthusiasm of the multitude rarely leave its masters indifferent. God has his elect everywhere;

but those in the official world, whom truth enlightens, rarely have the same frankness, nor the same vigour as simple souls among the people. Their position hampers them, they have a thousand interests to consider, and they only answer with caution to the appeal of their conscience. Among these was a certain Nicodemus, an influential Pharisee, he seems to have belonged to the great council; according to the Talmud his true name was Bonai; he was a priest, and also an official charged with the administration of the canals and wells, in order to provide for the needs of strangers who flocked into the town on the great feast-days; he was still living during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and he belonged to one of the three wealthiest Jewish families in the city. When persecution afterwards raged against the disciples of Jesus his goods were confiscated, and his family reduced to poverty.

Nicodemus had been struck by the teaching and, above all, by the miracles of Jesus. In the sincerity of his new faith, he wished for explanation and instruction from the lips of the Master himself; he asked for a secret conversation, and came to him by night, in order, no doubt, not to awaken any suspicion, since to come to Jesus, at that moment, was compromising. In spite of his reserve, such an action denotes an upright heart; to seek the light, even timidly, is alway worthy of praise and respect.

What astonished the Pharisees and all the learned men who acted in good faith, from the first manifestation of Jesus, was a return and awakening of the prophetic spirit. Jesus did not give the impression of a scribe, a doctor, or a Haggadist, but of a prophet; his word did not, like that of all the masters, who, for four centuries, had taught the people, rest on the letter of the Law and on human tradition, but was a direct inspiration. No name, in the mouth of a Pharisee, was greater or more flattering than that of Prophet.

By this title then Nicodemus addressed him: "We know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, if God be not with him."

Jesus, who read to the very bottom of this uncertain soul, went straight to the question which preoccupied and agitated all religious spirits at the time of Nicodemus, and said, "Verily verily, I say unto you, Unless a man be born again, he cannot

see the kingdom of God." To be born again, that deep saying in which was contained the whole doctrine of Jesus on the spiritual Kingdom and the function of Messiah, disconcerted Nicodemus and wounded all his prejudices. He was one who believed it possible to speak of new birth to a Gentile or a sinner ; but a true son of Abraham, an Israelite of pure race, a zealous Pharisee, had no need of transformation. Surely he was worthy by his race, and his faithfulness, of the Kingdom of heaven. Affecting therefore to give to the word of Jesus an entirely material sense, he answered, not without some artifice and a touch of irony which ill concealed his embarrassment : " How can a man be born again when he is old ? can he enter again into his mother's womb, and be born ? "

Jesus renewed his declaration, and explained it : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." The baptism of water, as John gave it, prepared for regeneration, but the outpouring of the Spirit promised in the times of the Messiah alone could accomplish it. To overthrow at one blow all the race prejudices of Nicodemus, Jesus included in the same inferiority, the same worthlessness, and the same want of power, all that is not God and his Kingdom : " That which is born of the flesh is flesh," whatever be its name, its privilege and its race ; " that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Between the flesh and the Spirit there is a great gulf. Spirit may be poured out on flesh ; flesh cannot of itself be lifted towards the Spirit ; whoever will enter into the Kingdom of the Spirit must be born of the Spirit. Jesus said again : " Marvel not that I said unto you that you must be born again." The Spirit is mysterious and free as the wind ; " it bloweth where it listeth ; thou hearest its voice and thou knowest not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every man who is born of the Spirit." He is as inscrutable as God from whom he comes, as God to whom he returns.

Nicodemus, astonished and perplexed, endeavoured to comprehend the mystery to which the learning of the Pharisees gave him no clue. He said, " How can these things be ? " Then said Jesus unto him, " Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things ? "

The prophets indeed had everywhere announced the outpouring of the Spirit for the Messianic time, an outpouring which should make of Israel a holy people, and create in it

that new life of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus : the very soul of their doctrine and their hope. But one condition was laid upon them : faithful obedience to the word of God's messengers. Jesus demanded this teachableness from Nicodemus ; he who believes understands ; he who shelters himself behind his human and literal knowledge, remains in darkness.

Then, at once joining himself to the prophets whose authority Nicodemus could misunderstand, Jesus said : " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things," that is to say, the conditions necessary for every man to enter into the Kingdom, " and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things," and the mysteries of the Kingdom of God ?

Nicodemus was silenced ; and Jesus felt that the reproach had taught him to be trustful ; he then opened to him that divine world which none can know except the Son of Man, for no one has ascended up into heaven, and known the will of God, save he who came down from heaven, the Son of Man. " And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Thus Jesus allowed the great destiny of the Messiah to become visible in the same ray of light where the glory and the death of the Son of Man were mingled together, and where the death was hidden by the glory. The whole mystery of this destiny has its unfathomable source in the love of God. " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now is the hour of salvation, the crisis, and it must run its course. A question arises in view of this separation of mankind round the Son of Man. Some believe and come, others believe not and are rejected. " And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." That which comes from God returns to God.

This conversation of Jesus and the Pharisee Nicodemus is

the first written revelation of the Master's teaching ; it has been preserved for us by the fourth Gospel, in a few sentences which sum it up and allow us to see its main lines and its depth.

We see what the Kingdom of God is : the participation of man in the very life of God ; we see how we enter into it : by a second birth which makes of man a new being, no longer carnal but spiritual ; we learn the condition of this birth : the baptism of water and of the Spirit ; and we know henceforth that to understand the mystery we must have faith in the word of God's messengers, and of him who is above them all, the Son of God. Jesus' words faintly foreshadowed this truth, which after-events were to make perfectly clear : he was the great sign raised in the midst of the ages and the nations ; a sad yet wonderful sign, as was the cross by which he triumphed and on which he was to die.

The evangelist does not tell us the effect on Nicodemus ; we may suppose that such revelations from such lips enlightened the soul of the Pharisee : he became a disciple of the Master, in secret, but always ready to defend him. We shall hear him later, in a tumultuous scene of the Sanhedrin, when his colleagues, the doctors, were resolved on the arrest of Jesus, raise his voice for justice and exclaim, " Doth our law permit that any man should be condemned before he is heard ?" And when Jewish hatred had succeeded in doing away with Christ, he was to follow his Master faithfully even to death ; he was to join himself to Joseph of Arimathea and the other disciples, to render to the Crucified the rites of sepulture, and he was to come to embalm the body, bringing a rich provision of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds in weight.

Jesus did not prolong his sojourn at Jerusalem. When the feast was over, he left the town with his disciples and dwelt in the country of Judaea.

This sojourn in Judaea lasted for several months ; Jesus left it to return to Galilee by Samaria, four months before the harvest, that is to say, in December of the year 781 from the foundation of Rome. One phrase in the fourth Gospel gives us a short but valuable note on this period of his preaching in Judaea. " Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, he made proselytes, and all came to him." It appears evident

that Jesus wished to consecrate the first times of his public life, by himself preparing the people to receive his word and to submit to his action. He did not begin over again, but rather completed and confirmed what John the Baptist had attempted with so much trouble. The whole of his preaching seems to have been summed up in two lines, which the Gospel of St. Mark has preserved for us. He no longer said, as John had done : " The time is at hand " ; but " The time is fulfilled." If, as did his forerunner, he proclaimed the necessary law of transformation and penitence, he also added, " The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and he demanded faith in the Gospel for the news which he bore and realised ; he allowed his disciples to baptize like John, and made this a prelude to the institution of Christian baptism, which was to be the effective sign of the spiritual regeneration of man. The attraction of his word and his person was powerful ; all the country of Judaea was once more moved, and the crowd flocked towards him, attracted by the renown of his virtue and his miracles.

One of the dominant ideas which at that moment excited the crowd and its teachers, the numerous disciples of John and those of Jesus, was the purification necessary to be worthy of the Kingdom. A controversy between one or more Jews and the disciples of the Baptist, on this very matter of purification, was a sign of the state of public opinion. We do not know the ground of the dispute, whether it were the relative value of the ablutions prescribed by the Law, of the rite instituted by John, and of baptism as practised by the disciples of Jesus ; nor does anything in the narrative of the fourth Gospel enable us to clear up the difficulty. The striking fact brought to light by the historian, and the only one of any importance, is the annoyance of the followers of the Baptist at the increasing success of Jesus.

After the discussion they came to their master, who was still baptising the multitude, not long before the end of his career. He was then at Enon, a little place renowned for the abundance of its springs, and of which the name and the traces are lost. St. Jerome, following Eusebius, places it near Salem, in the valley of the Jordan, on the right bank, eight miles south of Scythopolis. Perhaps, therefore, it belonged to the territory and province of Judaea. " Master," said his

disciples to John, " he who was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou gavest witness, baptizes, and all men seek him."

Anger and jealous humour breathed through these words. The success of Jesus affected those who had joined the Baptist ; it seemed to them that the glory of their master was declining, that he would be eclipsed by a new-comer, and they could not resign themselves to a defeat in which they found themselves involved.

The complaint of his disciples called forth from John a new testimony concerning the Messiah. Personal renunciation has rarely been couched in more sincere and dignified language, nor in words more humble and delicate ; and certainly, has never inspired a nobler eulogy of the person by whom it was to be carried out. " Why all this trouble and these empty discussions ? " said the Baptist. " A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." If I am a voice crying in the desert, God hath given me that voice I am but what he has made me. " Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this my joy therefore is fulfilled." He knew that his destiny was accomplished, and, resigning himself with a firm and quiet mind, said : " He must increase, but I must decrease."

The thought of the Messiah in whom he saw himself absorbed, took entire possession of him from his first interview with Jesus at the Jordan. Our common human speech is not enough to describe it as he saw it, and he invented a new language.

" It is he that cometh from above," he said, recalling the words of his father Zacharias, in announcing the Christ : " He is the dayspring from on high. He is above all," for all others come of the earth ; and " whoever is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth." Nature is determined by origin, and nature again determines our words and actions. But " he cometh from above ; what he speaketh, that he hath seen and heard " in heaven, where truth is as light, changeless, boundless. He beareth witness of that which he hath seen and heard ; but, he added, looking towards his disciples, " his witness is not received ; " and yet, to receive his witness " is to set to our seal that God is true."

His words are the words of God ; he cannot err. God has given him the Spirit without measure. The vision of his Baptism passes before him. " The Father," he said, " loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

These words, the last by which he called on his disciples to attach themselves to Jesus, were the testament of this great prophet. The wrath of God came back to the lips of John as at the beginning of his ministry ; then it was the anger of justice with which he menaced those who were obstinate in their impenitence ; now, he terrified the blind who resisted the appeal of the Messiah, by the anger of love unrecognized. Henceforward, he was to be silent. He had nothing more to say about his Master, but we shall see him hereafter make a last effort, from the depths of his prison, to induce the Master to speak and convince his obstinate disciples.

The news of the success of Jesus in the country of Judaea came to the ears of the Pharisees, who were moved by it. The jealous rivalry of the disciples of John was to reinforce the rising opposition already disclosed in the city. Jesus was warned of it ; his disciples, many of whom had been the disciples of John, and who formed a constant bond between himself and John, told him the incidents as they occurred ; and he would not give too strong an impulse to the hostility of his enemies. His work had hardly begun. It would be wise to retire from the strife, for absence closes many conflicts. Jesus quitted Judaea, and, attended by his disciples, he directed his journey towards Galilee, taking the road by Samaria.

## CHAPTER IX

### JESUS AMONG THE SAMARITANS

SAMARIA owes its name to its chief city, which in its turn was so called from the hill Chamoron, on which Omri, King of Israel, built it nine centuries before Jesus ; the hill itself was named after Chamor, one of the sons of Canaan. We find thus an example of the perpetuity of names and traditions in that unchanging East, where man, after having hoped so long, can now only remember.

The Samaritans had been hated for centuries by the men of Galilee and Judaea ; and time, instead of softening it, had only deepened their hatred. Their enmity dates from the division of the Ten Tribes, which broke the unity of the kingdom of David ; and afterwards came the exile and the fall of the kingdom of Israel. Samaria, desolated by exile, was invaded by colonies of foreigners coming from the provinces of Babel, Cuthra, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, sent by order of Shalmaneser to repeople the country. The blood of Ephraim was mixed with that of these Gentiles, and, although the religion of Moses remained supreme among the Samaritans, the Israelites, refusing to recognise them as brethren, added contempt to their old hatred, and called them Cuthites, from the name of one of the Gentile tribes with which they had mingled their blood.

In the first century, in the time of Jesus, the relations between the Jews and the Samaritans had lost nothing of their rancorous hostility. In this obstinate race all feelings endure and grow stronger. There was some danger in passing through Samaria on the way to Jerusalem ; many Galilaeans went out of their road to avoid it, and passed either through the valley of the Jordan or across the plain of Sharon. The Samaritans avenged themselves for contempt by violence, and denied all hospitality.

Their outcast state, for many centuries, had kept them absolutely strangers to the whole religious development of Israel. The Pentateuch and perhaps the older prophets were

enough for them ; but they knew nothing of the teaching of the Pharisees. The only point of contact with the Jews at that time, was that, like them, they expected the Messiah, the great prophet announced by Moses. This hope was exclusively religious : no political ambition, no earthly dream, stained its purity. Their great prophet was not, as in the case of the Jews, one who should have universal dominion, but a messenger like unto Moses, a legislative reformer, whose office would be entirely moral and spiritual.

They not only rejected the tradition and the observances of the doctors, but ignored them. No words can express the disdain which the masters and rigid orthodox had for this small population so abominabel in their eyes ; they avoided their very name ; the greatest insult in their mouth was not the epithet of Gentile or Publican, but that of Samaritan ; and Jesus was not exempt from this reproach.

Far from sharing in the sentiments and prejudices of his countrymen, Jesus loved the excommunicated folk of Samaria ; and when, on quitting Judaea, he chose to traverse their territory, it was because he knew that he should there find, closed against his enemies, ground prepared to receive his word ; nor was his expectation deceived.

In the time of Jesus the province of Samaria had for its chief city a new town, built by Herod to the west of the old capital, on the hill above the plain of Sharon, and named by him Sebasts after the Emperor Augustus. But Sichem remained venerable by its memories ; its fortunate situation near the two routes which made the principal lines of communication between east and west, north and south, gave it a great commercial importance ; the Jews in scorn called it Sychar.

When Jesus, following the very road by which Abraham and Jacob had passed, returned from Judaea into Galilee, " Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." It was in the winter, in the middle of December, at the hour of midday, the sixth hour of the day among the Orientals. The disciples were gone into the city to buy food, leaving him alone. He seemed to await someone's coming. " There cometh a woman of

Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." But she, knowing from his language that a Jew was addressing her, refused. "Then, saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" Jesus following out his own thoughts and wishing to elevate the woman's, answered her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

This meeting with the woman at Jacob's Well, this demand of water to drink, this conversation, these ordinary incidents of life, gave occasion to Jesus for a manifestation of himself, which was touching and sublime in its confidential character. He was the Christ who had come, who was expected by the Samaritans, by the Jews, and by all mankind; he proclaimed this to a sinful woman, whom his presence transformed, to whom his word revealed eternal life; he called himself the Gift of God; to whomsoever asketh of him, he communicates the Spirit which he called living water, borrowing this symbol from the water which he asked of the Samaritan.

This conversation at Jacob's Well with a fallen woman, remains one of the most touching evidences of the goodness and mercy of Christ; he was already showing himself as the Good Shepherd, finding the lost sheep. All that is weak and wandering is meant to be of his fold; helplessness is one of the qualifications for it. Womanhood gains elevation and honour from this Samaritan, from whom the Master did not disdain to ask drink, and with whom he spoke of that mysterious water which slakes the thirst of those who, like this woman, feel, in their sorrow, a more ardent desire of eternal consolation.

Upon the arrival of the disciples, the Samaritan woman retired, leaving her pitcher filled for the service of the wayfarers, and, deeply stirred by what she had heard, went her way into the city. She burned to tell to others, to tell to all, the cause of her agitation. Jesus knew well that his words would be repeated at Sichem.

Come and see, said she to all whom she met: I have found at Jacob's Well a man who told me all things that ever I did: it may be the Messiah.

The idea that the Great Prophet might have come among them stirred up all the city. No one who knows the East, with its constant restlessness and its religious curiosity, will be surprised that such was the effect of a simple woman's word. The men of Sichem came out, and took their way towards the patriarch's well.

Meanwhile, Jesus, still seated there, seemed to be absorbed not so much in the fatigues of his journey as in the prospect of the work that was about to be accomplished, and now just begun, in Samaria, by his Father's Providence. He ate no food. "Master," said his disciples, "eat, we pray thee." But he refused. "As for me," he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." They dared say no more, but, without a suspicion, as they were, of his hidden meaning, they said quietly one to another: "Hath any man brought him aught to eat?"

Jesus undeceived them. "My meat," he added, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

The greater a man is the more completely he escapes from the tyranny of his earthly needs; the body lives by the earth, but the soul is nourished by God; and, satisfied by God, sustains and restores the failing body. The sentiment of duty existed in Jesus in its highest and purest form. His conscience was the voice of his Father speaking within him; and obedience was his life. Man fails every hour: distracted, uncertain, and inconstant, he yields to his desires and gives way under sacrifice; the will of God demanded heroic sacrifices of Jesus, whose meat was to do the will of him that sent him. But at this moment the will of the Father was full of gentleness; after the first difficulties which he encountered in Jerusalem and in Judaea, here in Samaria was a land left to him, a whole town which rose and followed him. And, indeed, as he

was speaking of that which was his meat, he turned towards Sichem ; and the inhabitants came to meet him.

He asked of his disciples : " Say you not, in four months, then cometh harvest ? I tell you, lift your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." The crowd of Samaritans seemed to him as a ripened cornfield. On seeing them come near, he felt a thrill of gladness. " Happy is the husbandman," he added. The full ears are his reward ; " he gathers them unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." For we must realise the truth, " One soweth, and another reapeth." The Father has divided the task. " I sent you to reap that which you have not sown. Others have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours."

Jesus was alluding to the patriarchs and prophets, whose word, cast on earth as a divine seed, had slept there for long ages, but now, at his voice and under his action, was to become a harvest ripe for the sickle of his disciples.

The men of Sichem gave him an enthusiastic reception, and begged him to abide with them. Their hostile prejudices quickly vanished : Jesus yielded to their request ; he went to Sichem and remained there two days.

The rapid summary of St. John gives us no detail of the preaching in the town of Sichem. The success was extraordinary ; at the witness of the woman alone many already believed in Jesus ; but when they had heard himself, a far greater number recognised in him the expected Messiah. There was no question of signs and miracles, as at Jerusalem and in Judaea ; this despised race, excommunicated by the Jews, believed as soon as they heard his words. It is probable that he revealed to them, as to the woman, the mystery of his Messiahship and his Kingdom, to which every man is called without distinction of race, on the sole condition of believing in his word. He lifted them out of the contempt of ages, under which the Jews had overwhelmed them ; as they believed in Moses, they believed in the Prophet whose advent Moses had announced, and they saw in him the Saviour of the world.

This ministry in Samaria filled Jesus with a holy joy ; he encountered no opposition, he met no barrier of prejudices or idle doctrines, no human curiosity or mere legalism ; nor

sinister authority demanding the credentials of his mission ; no Pharisee opposing to his word the subtleties of arrogant science ; no excited and exacting crowd to demand miracles ; he must have seen in this a foretaste of the future of his doctrine, when one day, beyond the narrow limits of Judaea, it should take possession of the whole Gentile world. This small harvest was the prelude of the greater, for he knew that his Kingdom was that of the humble and disinherited, the weak and poor, the hungry, and thirsty after righteousness. The greater a man's need the easier his access to Christ.

After this two-days' halt, Jesus continued his journey towards Galilee ; the welcome and faith which he had received from strangers, who were half Gentiles, had moved him profoundly. In returning to his country, among his own people, where his destiny as Messiah called him, he naturally thought of the difficulties which awaited him, the rejection which he would provoke, the hardness of heart, and violence which he had already experienced at Jerusalem. In his sadness he compared the Samaritan to the Jew, those whom he was leaving with those to whom he came, and he spoke to his disciples words often again to rise to his lips : " A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country."

Galilee, however, did not remain strange or indifferent to the increasing renown of Jesus ; the renown of his manifestation in the city, the success of his ministry among the rural population of Judaea, the signs and wonders which were added to his personal influence, all contributed to render him remarkable among his countrymen. Moreover, a great number had seen in Jerusalem itself, and on the banks of the Jordan, his power of working miracles, which was above all that which struck minds greedy of marvels. Jesus was grieved at this tone of mind ; he reproved this vehement desire for miracles ; he saw in it secret selfishness, misplaced eagerness, want of confidence, and blameworthy curiosity. He said to them in a tone of reproach : " Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." However, because of the renown which preceded him, he was received with favour by the Galilaeans.

The little caravan separated ; the disciples went each one to his own home, some to Cana, others to Bethsaida and Capernaum. He does not himself appear to have gone back to Nazareth ; he avoided it, as at his first return, from motives

of which we are ignorant, and went to Cana, where his mother seems to have been still living with relations or friends.

The disciples in their dispersal spread the news of the arrival of Jesus throughout the provinces and in the town of Capernaum in particular, where Peter lived. A miracle increased the glory of the Galilaean prophet and brought his name to the notice of Herod Antipas : " And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son, for he was at the point of death." Messages, visits, and embassies, in the East, are always attended with a certain pomp ; the great person who waited on Jesus must have had an escort, with which he entered the Prophet's house. Jesus did not at first appear to listen to his prayer. He knew well that it was not the Messiah whom the nobleman sought in him, but the miracle-worker, and the healer of material need. Such a faith did not move him much. Without first looking to the grief of the suppliant father, but as the Saviour, always more careful to heal the soul than the body, he said : What feeble faith is yours, " except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." This tone increased the father's grief. " The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus was touched with compassion, and saith unto him, Go thy way ; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." The words of Jesus always sank deeply into the soul.

We see here, in a striking manner, with what art he was able to gain entire confidence. He loved those simple souls, which, even before they had seen his miracles, came to him freely, and believed in him with their first faith ; and on this condition he gave play to his divine power. In order to gain the confidence of this counsellor of Herod he declared to him that his son was healed, and he, before having ascertained it, without hesitation and without reserve, believed what Jesus said ; he yielded entire faith and went his way. " And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth." The whole family of this officer of Herod

believed in the new prophet ; the miracle must have made considerable stir ; that which passes among the crowd does not always reach the ears of the great, and is lost in obscurity, but that which affects the great has its part in the consideration and respect which surround them.

The miracle was only the first of those which Jesus was to work in the land of Galilee when he came to fix his abode there ; and just as that of Cana was wrought with reserve and mystery, so in the same measure was the healing of this son of this officer of Antipas accomplished with acclaim. It was, in fact, necessary that opinion should be prepared, little by little, for the influence which Jesus was to exercise upon it. Nothing contributed more decidedly to this end than these divine works in which the close and absolute union between Jesus and his Father was shown. He promised the impossible, in the human sense of the word, and he realised the impossible, for those who, after the example of the man at Capernaum, believed in his word.

The sojourn of Jesus in Galilee on this second journey was prolonged from the month of December, 781, to a feast of which the fourth evangelist does not give the name, but which was probably that of Purim or Lots, celebrated in the month of Adar, corresponding to our month of February, two months before the Passover. Jesus, whose centre of activity was still at Jerusalem and in Judaea, went on the occasion of this solemnity to the Holy City. We are absolutely ignorant of the details of his ministry before this journey ; but it is probable that he then visited more than once his disciples of Bethsaida and Capernaum, and revealed himself by more than one sign, but this is a blank page, which in default of documents we may not fill with hypotheses. Neither do we know who went with him to Jerusalem. All that can be said, according to the testimony of St. John, is that this arrival of Jesus in the Holy City was of decisive importance in the development of his mission.

## CHAPTER X

### JESUS THE SON OF GOD

THE first stay of Jesus at Jerusalem and his apostleship in Judaea had produced considerable results. They had pointed him out to the whole nation, to the people and the hierarchy, to those who were indifferent to the Law, and to the fanatical for it, to the unlettered and to the wise. The multitude, in general, struck by his miracles, held him for a prophet; and many, even among those who studied the Scriptures, like Nicodemus, could not refuse to see in him a messenger of God and a Master.

It is, however, to be remarked that the name of Messiah was not pronounced in the tumult of the crowd; the aspect of the Galilaean workman hardly answered to the dreams of popular imagination nor to the prejudices of Pharisaic learning. Jesus, moreover, carefully avoided every word and act which could excite the one or flatter the other party. The vigorous step which he had taken in the Temple by the expulsion of the traffickers disclosed the spiritual reformer consumed by the zeal of God. He was not only like the Baptist, a voice in the desert appealing to the conscience, but an authority which intervened in the very organisation of the theocracy. The rulers were conscious of this from the first, and with that instinct which hardly ever deceives those who feel themselves threatened, they recognised in Jesus a power which they must break or suppress. But the craft and violence of man, his short-lived science and his ephemeral power, his plots and his destructions, have never succeeded in hindering that which ought to be.

In this first encounter with the religious rulers, Jesus had not yet revealed himself; he took an attitude, the firmness of which surprised, and the holy audacity stupefied them; strong in a righteous deed, which recommended itself by the purest sentiment of religion and justice, he disdained to abate his titles, and retired, avoiding the crowd which he distrusted, illuminating willing minds, leaving the priests astonished,

confused and threatening. Ten months later he reappeared at Jerusalem.

Although a certain reserve still characterized the public action of Jesus, yet his influence spread far and wide. If ever his enemies had thought that they could set him aside, his increasing ascendency would soon have scattered this illusion. The moment had come to declare what he was, to explain his divine mission to his adversaries themselves, to prove his right in face of religious authority; Jesus was now to declare the full greatness of his religious career. The occasion was a miracle of which it is important to know the detailed narrative, for it was these details, brought into light with much bitterness by the Pharisees, which occasioned a new collision between Jesus and the chiefs of the nation.

There was at Jerusalem, near the sheep market, a Pool, surrounded by five porches, called by the Jews Bethesda, a kind of hospital which, during the day, was a shelter to the sick against the wind, sun, and rain. There lay a multitude of sick folk, blind and halt, or with withered limbs. A supernatural virtue was attributed to the water in the Pool; it was from time to time agitated by a mysterious power, and whoever first entered in, after the moving of the water, rose from it sound and whole whatever his infirmities.

Now in the midst of these unfortunate people there was a man who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years. "When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward

Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

When they learned the healing of the paralytic man at the Pool of Bethesda, the Jewish authorities did not even think of wondering at its marvellous side. Like all prejudiced, narrow, and ill-conditioned minds, they took hold of the detail which displeased them and resented it, wounded in their empty religion. That Jesus cured the paralytic with a word was nothing to them ; that he had healed on the Sabbath day and ordered a man to carry his bed, despising the Sabbath law of rest, was a scandal. Their arbitrary rules and human traditions, their scholastic decisions, and miserable casuistry, were essential ; whoever would not bend himself under this yoke was blameworthy, a sinner, and a revolutionary, who must be reprimanded and persecuted. Nothing is more inexorable or more irritable than minds given over to this kind of religious aberration ; the man who loves God and worships in truth is gentle, but he who loves himself under the cover of religion is always bitter and violent. True piety is courteous, false piety is hypocritical and ill-natured. The great majority of the members of the hierarchy, Sadducees and Pharisees alike, had strangely perverted the Mosaic Law ; and this inveterate perversion, blinding and debasing them, must have closed their minds to the truth, and inspired in them, against Jesus, a repulsion and violence which nothing could conquer.

Jesus was therefore accused by the Pharisees of violating the Sabbath. It is possible that this accusation was a judicial act, and that he had to appear before the tribunal charged with judging crimes against religion. Perhaps, however, the intervention of the Sanhedrin did not go to such a length, and some members were told off only to reproach Jesus for his misunderstanding of the Law. In either case the answer of Jesus must be closely studied, in the summary which the fourth Gospel has preserved for us ; he took the occasion offered him to declare clearly and solemnly what he was, to show to the Sanhedrin and its emissaries wherein his religious work consisted, and to declare those undeniable rights on which he founded his public action.

The emissaries of the Sanhedrin were shocked and scan-

dalised, and complained that he not only broke the Sabbath, but he dared to call God his Father, thus making himself equal to God. From that moment Jesus seemed to them a blasphemer whom they must seek to kill; and he heard around him murmured threats of death. But he, who never feared to throw himself against prejudices, did not allow himself to be intimidated by the hatred which these teachings might let loose on him. For him the will of the Father was all; death was of no account if this will called him to die; he came into the world only to bear witness of the truth.

His words grew more solemn and more decided; far from weakening this equality with God, advanced against him as blasphemy, he explained it, and gave it its full force.

The type and guiding law of his actions was nothing created and nothing human, but God himself, the influence of the Father. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

This phase of the life of Jesus between the first calling of a few disciples and this second journey to Jerusalem, shows forth the hero and opens his active ministry. The manifestation was overwhelming, the beginning decisive.

Jesus declared himself the Son of God, and began his ministry at Jerusalem itself, in the face of the people and the authorities; Jerusalem was itself the nation, the centre from which emanated two powers which were obeyed; public opinion and authority. It was known what he was and what he desired; wherever he should bend his steps henceforward, the eyes of the people and their rulers would be upon him.

The effect was gained; from the north to the south, from Hermon to the confines of Idumaea, from the west to the east, from the Mediterranean to the vast plains of the Arab kingdom of Aretas, Palestine was aware that a great prophet had arisen, calling himself the Son of God, proving his mission by miracles, and claiming faith in his word. It was not ignorant that men's minds were divided in regard to him; that he attracted the crowd, but that the rulers of the people, with few exceptions, the doctors and the elders, the aristocracy of fortune, of the priesthood and of learning, the high priests and the Sanhedrin, were in open opposition to him.

They regarded him as a false prophet, an impious blasphemer; they watched him and followed his steps, and, fearing that the crowd, led astray by him, should escape from their authority, they were resolved to persecute Jesus, and treat him with all the rigour of their law directed against those who led the people astray and blasphemed Jehovah.

Thus at Jerusalem Jesus had only succeeded in gathering round him from among the multitude a few simple and upright souls, in creating among the upper classes a few unknown and secret friends, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and in provoking in the official world, the guardian of traditions and laws, an invincible and menacing antagonism.

The emnity of the priesthood against Jesus from the very first hour might have hindered, paralysed, and indeed annihilated his action; but God restrained the power of evil, and mastered its impetuous hatred. On the other hand, Jesus knew the exact measure of the opposition he might excite, without prejudice to his work, and, as his hour was not yet come, he had the wisdom to flee from danger when the danger became too pressing.

In this wisdom we must seek the historic motive for his abandonment of Judaea and the chief city, and for seeking in Galilee more quiet and hospitable surroundings, which allowed him to found the work of his Kindgom. This was the promised land; since Judaea rejected him, he retired from her, realizing one of those prophecies which six centuries before had already described his life :—

"Nevertheless," said the seer, "the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

An important religious event, which produced a profound emotion in the Jewish nation, warned Jesus that the time had come to allow his influence to be widely felt. God takes to himself those whom he sends. The facts of their life, the incidents which surround them, the part that they have to play, are all in harmony; all that happens to them comes from

that invisible hand which orders everything ; and the intended work is often accomplished in spite of, and unknown to, those who desire to stifle it.

John had been thrown into prison ; this bold and indomitable prophet, this penitent, hungering after righteousness and full of reproaches against the vices of his countrymen, he who laid bare all hypocrisy and had spared none in his holy wrath, had not hesitated to denounce the sins of a prince. His voice, which the presence of Jesus had rendered gentle, found all its vehemence to blame and condemn the conduct of Herod Antipas. The tetrarch, following the impious example of his father, had put away his wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, to marry a princess of his own blood, Herodias, the wife of his brother, Herod Philip. This adulterous union shocked every true Jew : John was the avenger of the outraged conscience of the nation ; he reproached Herod with his crime in the name of God.

The tetrarch might perhaps have accepted in silence the humiliation which the prophet inflicted upon him ; he was a man of timid character and undecided mind ; but Herodias could not brook the insult. This imperious woman had not much trouble to make the man in whom she had inspired a blind passion, the instrument of her hatred. As always, a pretext was made of the necessity of looking after public order : it was pretended that there was a danger in the crowds drawn by John, and his arrest was decided. It was necessary to silence his burning words. The soldiers of Herod received the order to seize John and carry him off to the frontiers of Peraea and Arabia, to the fortress of Macherus in the steep and solitary mountains of Moab.

When his task is finished, the man of God disappears, leaving an open field to his successors ; the task of John was done, the ways were open and souls awakened ; the harbinger might be silent, Christ was to speak and work.

## CHAPTER XI

### GALILEE AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

On the news that the Baptist was cast into prison, Jesus quitted Judaea and retired to Galilee, in the power of the Spirit, in order to preach there the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Jewish tradition, dating from the Babylonian exile, divided the land of Israel into three parts : Judaea ; the parts beyond Jordan, or Peraea ; and Galilee. Samaria was excluded ; the orthodox teachers refusing it the privilege attached to the sacred soil. They did not, however, confound it with the Gentile territory. Its streams, its dwellings, its paths, they said in their formal science, did not defile the strict and faithful Jew.

When Jesus, avoiding the hatred and menaces of Jewish authority, left Jerusalem and resolved to carry the Gospel into Galilee, his renown was great. His eloquence and doctrine, and, above all, his miracles, made of him an extraordinary being ; he drew the crowd to him, struck their imagination, awakened their curiosity and enthusiasm.

He set himself to travel through the whole country, its towns and villages, to attend the small synagogues at the hour and day when the people assembled there. The reputation which preceded him always assured him of a warm welcome ; crowds ran to see and hear him. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the minister gave him the book, and after having read, standing as was the custom, the passage pointed out, he sat down and explained it.

The evangelization of Galilee held a considerable place in his public life ; it lasted fron eight to nine months, from the Feast of Purim in the year 29 to the Feast of Tabernacles in the same year. The whole work of Jesus, which he called his Kingdom, the work which was to fill the world under the name of the Church, was founded and organised in this brief period. The man of genius finds a whole life too short to instruct his disciples, to found his institutions, to raise a state

and reform a religion : he has need of many years for the realization of his plans ; but Jesus was content with a few months. In that little tetrarchy of Herod, the most despised portion of the land of Israel, he revealed what he was, took possession of the conscience of men, in the person of a few poor Galilaeans, whom he made his apostles, and he inaugurated with them and in them that Kingdom which was to know no limits in space and time.

The apparent poverty of the means is out of proportion with the greatness of the results, and this contrast is the greatest enigma of history. It is the mark of Jesus. Independent criticism is arrested before him and does not hesitate to recognise the mark of God.

The prophet of Galilee appears to criticism with a divine and creative force ; all the human names of philosopher, doctor, legislator, reformer, and even that of prophet, which the crowd gave him, are insufficient ; under the appearance of the Son of Man was truly the Son of God.

To understand the power of his action upon a fresh class of subjects, and the incidents which marked his mission, we must know the precise state of opinion and conscience among those to whom he came to preach the Gospel.

The rigid party of the Pharisees held sway over the learned class. In its teaching and its practices it affected a severity, all the greater because the lower classes, mixed with the numerous Gentiles of the country, had less zeal for observances, and less fanaticism against the customs and religion of foreigners ; it shared the dislike of the masses for the Roman dominion, and only resigned itself with difficulty to pay the annual tribute to Caesar.

The aristocracy was Sadducean ; it formed that party of the Herodians which had accepted as legitimate the reign of the Herods in spite of their Idumaean origin ; it had both fortune and honour, occupied the great administrative functions, and in Galilee, as in Judaea, lived in opulence, disdainful of the people, a friend to the tetrarchs, hostile to every new influence which threatened to stir the religious conscience or patriotism. One of the most unpopular functions was that of Collectors-General. They had for subordinate agents the receivers and the Publicans or tax-gatherers, who were charged

to collect the tribute-money. In this detested class plunder and injustice were the dominant vices ; the people, ground down by taxation, hated them ; the Pharisees, whose patriotism was offended, could not forgive them their alliance with Gentiles, and their making themselves the instruments of national servitude ; they treated them as outcasts, as thieves and robbers, and would not even take their witness in courts of justice. They were more numerous in Galilee than anywhere else, for the soil was fertile, the population dense, the roads frequented, and the traffic around the lake between the towns of Galilee, Decapolis, Trachonitis, Ituraea, and the country of Damascus was in full activity.

They were recruited from the lower classes, among those who lived without following in all their rigour the customs of the Pharisees, and which the devout party, in their pride and ritual piety, treated with the greatest contempt, calling them impious and sinners, like the usurers, thieves, gamblers, shepherds, sellers of fruit, who gathered in the sabbatical year and public entertainers who gave pleasure to the crowd by training birds to fight. The greater number in the villages and towns were despised by the Pharisees, who composed a little provincial aristocracy, the ascendency of which was uncontested because it was the personification of patriotism, and, which the Oriental and the Jew place above everything, the knowledge of the sacred Book and rites.

The Pharisaic and Sadducean doctrines which, at Jerusalem, had a considerable influence on the middle class, did not penetrate the masses. That which affected the crowd in the provinces was the ardent love of country, the idea of a Messiah, the deliverer, and, as a religious practice, the great pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

For some months the Messianic agitation excited by John the Baptist was extreme ; the Galilaeans were attracted to him who announced the coming of God ; many had been affiliated to him as disciples. The imprisonment of the prophet, far from calming the movement, had increased its energy ; the prisoner of Herod was girt about in the eyes of the people with the aureole of a martyr. Persecution had not stifled the word of the prophet, but increased and consecrated it : all those whom he had roused still looked and waited ; the publicans and sinners who had confessed their sins and been baptised asked even more eagerly when, and how, the Lord

would come, and what were the roads by which they would see his appearance.

One word summed up these hopes and agitations : " The Kingdom of God is at hand." The phrase, borrowed from Daniel, designated the reign of Messiah, succeeding the great kingdoms of the earth, and eclipsing them by its splendour and its blessings.

The apocalypses of two centuries which preceded the advent of Jesus were full of it. It was an axiom in the Jewish schools that every prayer into which did not enter the thought of the Kingdom of God was not a prayer at all. In the ritual of the Temple, the people answered the prayers of the priests by the cry : " Blessed for ever be the name of the glory of the Kingdom of God."

On the lips of Jesus this expression gained fire and force ; and went straight to the heart of the people. Every nation has its phrases which, at certain times, exercise a magic power. Diversely understood and interpreted, they serve as a rallying cry ; the thought which they translate is always sure to awaken attention, command sympathy, and inflame passion ; they possess this irresistible charm because they express, with greater or less accuracy, the ideal which at any given time attracts and excites a country, an age, a civilisation.

For a great number the phrase remained vague ; the crowd neither defines nor analyzes, and, when it attempts to understand, it belittles and materialises everything. The best men among the Jews maintained their trust in the great promises of God, his mercy and faithfulness ; they awaited his manifestation, but did not define it, for fear they should misunderstand it.

Beyond these it is easy to see that two main currents attracted and led men's minds astray : the one earthly and political, the other legal and religious. Those who were swayed by the first expected to see, under the name of the Kingdom of God, the re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel, deliverance from the yoke of the Romans, and a Messiah who should be the earthly chief of his kingdom. In the simplicity and eagerness of faith they already saw Jerusalem as the central city of all nations, they contemplated the House of Jehovah as open to the Gentiles, thronging in crowds to adore God, and recognize in their Messiah an universal king.

The Kingdom of God, for Jews biassed by political and re-

ligious prejudices, was only their own kingdom. All substituted their own ideas for the thought of God, some wishing to subdue the world to one nation, others desiring to enslave consciences to an imperfect law ; but the Jewish nation was destined to perish, and the Mosaic Law to be completed. Jesus was the only being who comprehended and revealed in its fulness the divine thought which is summed up in the phrase, " The Kingdom of God."

He adopted this popular expression in his Galilaean mission ; none answered better to his designs and work, for it contained all his doctrine and plan ; it was his glory, his reason for existence, his whole genius.

Every word, every action of his life, had reference to it. When he preached, it was to publish the Gospel of the Kingdom and explain what it was ; when he taught the crowd on the mountain, it was to promulgate its laws ; when he spoke to the people in parables, on the shores of the lake, it was to set forth, in images, the mysteries of the Kingdom, its origin and evolution, its strifes and victories ; when he prayed and taught us to pray, it was that we should ask for its advent ; when he multiplied his miracles, it was to establish that he was its founder and Lord ; when he chose his apostles, it was to perpetuate his Kingdom after him, and make sure that it would be extended in the heart of mankind ; when he died, it was that by his death he might overcome the obstacles which hindered its establishment ; when he poured the Spirit of God into the hearts of those who believed on him, it was because the outpouring of the Spirit is the essence of the Kingdom ; when he desired that all should believe in him, it is because he is the only centre whence men can draw the Spirit which alone gives God the Kingdom ; when he was transfigured before a few of his disciples, it was to show them what the human being becomes in this Kingdom ; when he disclosed to them in prophetic discourse the scenes of the future, of the end of time, and that which is beyond, it was to show them the splendour of the universe reserved for the new race of the sons of God.

In order that this heavenly Kingdom might be realized, it was before all things necessary that God himself should intervene personally in his work ; now this personal intervention, so clearly announced by the prophet, was accomplished in Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, possessing at once, in all

their fulness, the power of God and the power of man ; it was necessary that the God who was unknown and misunderstood should reveal himself in his truth and in his will ; now, Jesus alone by his absolute union with God, Jesus who alone knew the Father and all the secrets of infinite wisdom, brings us this double revelation ; it was necessary that the Spirit of God, of which Christ had received the whole anointing, should be communicated to free man : now Jesus is the only source of that Spirit. Carnal man was to lend himself to that communication, to renounce himself, to be transformed, and to believe : Jesus demanded this of him and gave him the power to accomplish it. But the Kingdom of God being intended for all ages, all nations, and all civilizations, Jesus chose his workmen, whose duty was to continue his work, visibly and infallibly, to propagate and extend the divine Kingdom : and this he called his Church.

Considered in its essential elements, the Kingdom of God implies a chief, a law, and subjects. The chief is Jesus ; the law is the living Spirit of God or the will of the Father ; his subjects are the assembly of men who by faith recognise their head, open their hearts by repentance to the Spirit, and accept his will in love.

Considered in its evolution, it, like all that grows, has three phases : its origin, its laborious growth, and its consummation. In its initial phase it is concentrated in Jesus and the first believers in him ; in its growth, it includes the apostolic hierarchy, and all the believers who obeyed that hierarchy as the depository of the powers of the unseen Christ ; in its consummation it represents the glorious term of mankind regenerated in the glory reserved for the elect. These three states, bound each to the other, proceed each from the other ; the Church springs from the divine germ, which is Christ, growing like the branches of a giant tree which is to cover the world ; and mankind, entirely transfigured by Christ, springs out of mankind suffering with him, given over, like him, to persecution and strife, till the Spirit of God glorifies it in the fulness of life, as was the case with Jesus.

We see, therefore, that the Kingdom of God is the kingdom of the Spirit, since the Spirit of God himself has founded it, and that, in order to participate in it, man must renounce the flesh and be born in the Spirit ; that it destroys nothing, but fulfils all things, since it communicates to man the power

and the light of God which complete all things ; that it is not of this world, since the world contains only matter, physical life, and reason, which are all inferior to the Spirit of God ; that it suffers violence and is only won by an exercise of the will, for man, a slave to matter, to his instincts and vices, is obliged to transform himself with difficulty, and renounce matter, his passions, and his needs, in order to enter it ; that it is within man, for the Spirit of God makes his habitation in the soul and conscience ; that it is eternal, for the Spirit of God which constitutes it, is above all times and ages, all that passes away or dies ; that no power can prevail against it, for no force can prevail against God ; that it is peaceful, for the Spirit of God is love, and where love reigns, there reign also order and peace. We see finally how this invisible Kingdom is realised socially and visibly, by the Church founded on Jesus, in order to call together, little by little, from out the world and the ages, predestined souls, perpetuating his Spirit, his word, and his power.

The Galilaean period of the life of Jesus had an interest far beyond the poor Jews in the tetrarchy of Antipas. What was passing there was to ring through the universe ; the words spoken there were to be repeated to the four corners of the world ; the work founded there, round the lake of Gennesareth was to extend to every shore ; the law promulgated on the Mount was to be no passing and special code, but the eternal and universal code which should rule every conscience ; the miracles accomplished there were to be more than simple cures of the sick and afflicted. they were to be signs of the invisible healing of wounded hearts and paralytic souls, of darkened minds of which the world is full ; the chosen apostles were to become the great Church, they were to be perpetuated through the ages, to invade the earth and conquer it for Christ.

To accomplish his work, Jesus had the force of God which in him was translated into its human equivalents of wisdom, power, and goodness. His wisdom gave light, his power bore rule over matter and spirit, his goodness attracted all to him. Nothing which could give efficacy and authority to speech was wanting to that of Jesus. The Gospels, which never dream for an instant of apologising for their hero, disclose the extraordinary influence which he exercised. One phrase

occurs over and over again in their narrative : the multitude, they say, was astonished. Even those who were sent as spies returned overwhelmed : " Never man spake like this man," they said to those who sent them.

The words of Jesus, which lay bare his whole soul, embody the thought and power of God. They were Spirit and Life, they possessed supreme originality, boldness and clearness, strength and appropriateness ; they cut and thrust like a two-edged sword. Even when he occasionally borrowed expressions from the prophets he did not repeat them, but gave new light to the ancient formulas, together with a new sense ; he completed and fulfilled them. His words sparkled with inspiration from the fulness of the living God, and carried with them the living God. " Heaven and earth shall pass away," Jesus dared to say, " but my words shall not pass away." In fact, they still remain in the human consciousness like stars in the night.

The human race admires aphorisms gathered from his lips as the perfect and ideal expression of the truth. No prayer can replace his, or hold towards God, any other language than " Our Father, who art in heaven." He has given us the formula for all the heroic virtues ; for charity : " Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you " ; for humility : " Thou hypocrite, who canst see the mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not see the beam in thine own eye " ; of mercy towards the sinner : " Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her " ; of pardon for executioners : " Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do " ; of consolation and strength in sorrow : " Come unto me, all ye who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He has created a science of happiness, in those maxims which seem to defy human wisdom, and have never decieved any. Happy are the poor, the meek, the sorrowful, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the peacemakers, the persecuted ; these are they who shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

The word of Jesus possessed creative energy. When a man expresses a truth, he can only hope for good, but has no power to produce it. Jesus did the good of which he spoke ; his words were those of one who had sovereign and irresistible power. With a word he put to flight and subdued evil spirits, healed the sick, calmed every sorrow, gave movement

to the paralytic, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead.

The wonder-worker attracted and subdued still more than the evangelist ; the people are everywhere the same in the East as in the West ; power enthrals more than intelligence, startling facts more than eloquent words, miracles more than sermons. But when these two elements are united their influence is irresistible. No one before Jesus, and no one after him, has appeared on the earth so armed with the double power of God. The prophets had only intermittent rays of his light, and a force which they could borrow for exceptional works : Jesus possessed, as his own gift, eternal truth which enlightens, and infinite power, which life and death, nature and mankind obey.

Another element of popular power in Jesus was his kind and gentle character. He did not flatter the people as those who lead them astray, but he loved them. Everything in him was at the service of this love. He had compassion on the poor, the weak, the unhappy, the sinful and despised. This was in a marked contrast with the attitude of the Pharisees, the doctors, the leaders of every kind, priests, elders, scribes, who make a precept and almost a virtue of despising the populace. This character of Jesus was manifested in his whole life, in his words and deeds. In seeing him, the well-known passage of Isaiah about the servant of Jehovah recurs to mind : " Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."

The preaching of the Gospel in Galilee had a thoroughly popular character. Jesus, first taking the synagogues for the theatre of his preaching, where the crowd came together every Sabbath, was sure of reaching the entire population. He did not proceed like John, the prophet of the desert, who called the people to him, but he took the initiative by seeking of himself its presence : a sign of power and goodness.

If John stirred the Jewish conscience by the simple declaration of the advent of the Kingdom of God, Jesus must have exercised a far greater sway when he published to the Galilaean multitude that the Kingdom of God had come. Under any circumstances, this stirring news was at once certain to raise grave difficulties. The first was connected with the very idea of the Kingdom which was preached, the second with that of Messiah its founder. Everything in the doctrine and person of Jesus assailed the prejudices of the Galilaean people and doctors.

They had expected a political kingdom : Jesus announced a spiritual and interior Kingdom ; they had hoped that the Law would be dominant : Jesus prophesied the Kingdom of the Spirit ; they had desired a Messiah armed with earthly power : Jesus presented himself without any human authority, with no other force than that of his Father, the wisdom which teaches eternal Truth, the power which heals the soul and the body ; they dreamed of a triumph of the nation, and of the race of Abraham after the flesh, over all peoples : Jesus came to inaugurate a nation and a race of men regenerated by the Spirit ; they were persuaded that the name of sons of Abraham, and faithfulness to the Law of Moses, would suffice for their incorporation into the new people of God : Jesus demanded only moral transformation and faith in his word.

All was against him : we shall never find in Jesus that art, so familiar to politicians, of flattering opinion in order to gain it. He accommodated himself to weakness alone, by veiling truths too lofty for the people to understand ; and he tamed men's minds in order to lead them gently to the light. But even the power of God cannot avoid the resistance of man here below ; Jesus encountered it, and he inaugurated his Galilaean apostleship by failure.

The Gospel documents do not define the villages and towns of Galilee, to which he went preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. St. Luke, however, tells us in detail of a journey which he made to Nazareth at this time : and gives an animated narrative which brings before us a scene in a Jewish synagogue, and gives us the first commentary of Jesus on the nature of his Kingdom.

It would seem that Jesus had not returned to his own country, since the day when he had quitted it, in going

to the Jordan to receive baptism from John. He would now return and preach the Gospel in the town where he had grown up in obscurity, and consecrate to it the first-fruits of his Galilaean apostolate.

On the Sabbath day he came, as usual, to the synagogue, where so often he had been seen, seated in silence, in the lower places, undistinguished among his countrymen, listening to the reading of the Law, and the commentaries of the doctors and the elders. The unknown workman now reappeared with the renown of a prophet, and curiosity drew all eyes upon him. Men in the little town must have been impatient to verify all that was told of him ; the rulers of the synagogue must have regarded him with a certain arrogance ; the limited knowledge of the doctors in the provinces disposed them but ill to receive the words of an unlettered artisan, who, having never been at school, had no title to teach, and openly broke with their customs.

After the recitation of the accustomed prayers, and the reading of the Law, Jesus was honoured by being asked to read a passage from the Prophets. At the order of the president, the " Hasan " offered him the sacred roll ; he opened it, and found the following passage from the Prophet Isaiah : " The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God ; to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." He closed the book, gave it to the " Hasan," and sat down. All looked on in silence. Then he said : " What ye have heard, is this day fulfilled."

Jesus explained to the people of Nazareth that it was he on whom the Spirit of the Lord had descended, that in virtue of this divine unction he was the Messianic envoy, the chief of the Kingdom of God ; and he taught the nature of this Kingdom as Isaiah had prophesied it.

As soon as the first excitement died away, an objection sprung up in the minds of a great number. Jesus had clearly declared himself the Messiah ; it was asked by what right he dared to claim this title, and his humble birth was remembered with disdain : " Is not this," they said, " the son of Joseph ? "

Opposition grew warmer ; and he was pressed in an offended tone for the signs upon which he founded such high pretensions. Impartial reasoners remain calm ; but minds whose preconceived ideas are wounded are not impartial. At that time fanaticism was almost universal among the Jews : they demanded signs, and exacted these from Jesus as a justification of his claims as Messiah. Jesus refused them to the Nazarenes, as he always refused them to those who demanded them in a like spirit of unbelief. He gave them only to those who had faith, never to those who discussed with pride and ill-temper. This is a remarkable fact in his whole life, and a characteristic feature of his conduct. But signs had already been accomplished at Jerusalem, in Judaea and at Capernaum ; and surely he had a right to rely on them before his fellow-citizens, who were scandalised that the son of Joseph should declare himself the ambassador of God " And he said unto them : Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself : whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country."

Jesus remained inexorable. Nothing had any weight with him save trust and love ; no distrust affected him, no importunity made him give way. Like his Father, he resisted the proud and violent, and loved the humble and the meek. And he said : " Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land ; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet ; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." Jesus declared a hard truth to his assailants. He intimated by these examples that the Kingdom of God is not confined to the people of the prophets, that this obstinate people would not receive him, that the Messiah would be sent to the Gentiles ; to those paupers and lepers of whom the

poor woman of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian were the type. Nothing could more cruelly wound the religious pride of the Pharisees and their false patriotism.

Exasperated by the words of the Prophet, who judged them unworthy to be witnesses of his miracles, angered by his language about the Gentiles and the Holy People, the Nazarenes rose in wrath. In defiance of their Law, without previous judgment and without trial, they cast him out of the synagogue, drove him from their town as an excommunicate person ; and, in their fanaticism, endeavoured to cast him from the top of a rock.

A divine power guarded Jesus, so that he escaped from this outburst. The Gospel shows him to us calm and gentle, among all these excited crowds ; no one laid hand upon him, they dispersed on either side and he went his way. None had power over Jesus. The Spirit which filled him kept him safe. He went as the Spirit carried him, into the midst of men ; who, often as they banded themselves against him, were powerless to hurt him unless he surrendered himself to their attacks. He quitted Nazareth, and must have wept over it, for if nothing gives him more joy than faith, so nothing makes him so sorrowful as unbelief.

It is the lot of all those who are meek and humble to be misunderstood and persecuted. He took the way to the lake across the mountain by Cana and the plain of El Batouf and directed his steps towards Capernaum.

## CHAPTER XII

### JESUS AT CAPERNAUM

The Lake of Gennesareth is the gem of Galilee ; its waters are not of an unchanging blue, they resemble in their varying tints the opal rather than the sapphire. To this jewel the mountains form a beautiful setting.

Capernaum, one of the towns most frequented by the caravans, was situated at the northern point of the lake, a little nearer to the western shore than to the mouth of the Jordan, and stood at the entrance of the Wady Nisif, which contained the road leading to Damascus through Gaulonitis, on the gentle slopes which descend to the lake from the heights of Safed. Its houses extended down to the beach. The fishing industry was very active, and the little creeks served as harbours for the fishermen's boats. There was a special market at Jerusalem where the boatmen from the lake went to sell their dried fish. It is difficult to give the number of the population of Capernaum. As it was a frontier town of the tetrarchy, it had an enclosure of walls, a tax-office, and custom-houses. The inhabitants were proud of their synagogue, which they owed to the munificence of a centurion.

Only heaps of shapeless ruins, half buried under the earth, remain of this town, where Jesus dwelt. The extent of the ruins, which cover an area less than a mile in length and about half a mile in width, denotes that it was a small city. Even the name has almost disappeared : Capernaum is now Tel Hum.

It is not possible to say under what circumstances the flight of Jesus to Capernaum occurred. Was he accompanied by his mother and by members of his family ? Did he stop at Cana ? Did he take some of his disciples with him ? The silence of the Evangelists forbids us to answer these questions. But it is of importance for us to observe that Jesus, though cast out and repudiated by the Nazarenes, steadfastly continued his great work.

Even in this flight he began to attach to himself by the closest ties the disciples who were to labour with him. Hitherto they had not always followed in his train ; they had returned to their own families and to their own work, after having accompanied him on his journeys to Jerusalem. On their return from the Feast of Purim, when Jesus proceeded towards Nazareth, the disciples dispersed, each one taking the road to his own home.

Jesus, on approaching the shores of the lake, near Bethsaida, was followed by an increasing multitude. The people pressed upon him, says one Evangelist, to hear the word of God. As he walked along the beach he saw two ships, but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. One belonged to Peter ; this he entered, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land ; then he sat down, and from the ship he taught the people who remained on shore.

When he had finished speaking, he said unto Simon : " Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." " Master," said Simon, " we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing : nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." He did so, and they took such a great multitude of fishes that the net brake. They beckoned to their partners, who were in the other ship, to come and help them, and when these had come, they filled the two ships so that they began to sink. When Simon saw it, he fell at Jesus' feet. " Depart from me," he said, " for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The whole character of Peter is revealed in these words : spontaneous, frank, impetuous, and disinterested. They were amazed, both he and all that were with him, at the sight of such a draught of fishes. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were there. Jesus then said unto Simon : " Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The cry of Peter had touched him. The man who recognises his own unworthiness grows great in the sight of God. Peter, by speaking of himself as a sinful man, acknowledged the holiness of his Master. This feeling of his own nothingness and of the greatness of Jesus made him worthy to be initiated into his own high destiny. The first condition of apostleship is distrust of self.

" And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James and John his brother, who were in a ship mending

their nets. He called them, and they left their nets and their father, Zebedee, in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."

The first outline of the public work of Jesus now begins to show itself. The calling of the apostles is the first shoot of that living growth which will develop into the visible Church. The work to which he calls his disciples is the work of drawing men to him, to his teaching, to his law.

In his first appeal on the banks of the Jordan he had attracted men to him, without telling them whither he was leading them, but now he makes known to them their great destiny in words of the striking symbolism which he so often used : " Fishers of men."

The little sea of Galilee represented the world, the four fishermen of Bethsaida the forerunners of that numberless band of apostles who were to cast the net for mankind. The design is immense, the workers nothing ; but Jesus calls them, and just as God, whom he calls his Father, created the world out of nothing, so Jesus also will save it with nothing. The weakness of man will bear witness to the strength of God.

Jesus, attended by his four disciples, now arrived at Capernaum.

He was not unknown, for he had made a short stay there before his first journey to Jerusalem for the first Passover of his public life. Some months later the healing of the son of the steward of Herod the tetrarch had made him famous. The prophets had declared that the light of God would shine on the borders of this sea, where Capernaum stood, even to the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

It was the Sabbath day, and Jesus and his disciples went to the synagogue, where he preached. The impression he made was very great ; he separated himself from all the Masters, from the Pharisees, and from the Scribes ; he did not, after their fashion, appeal to the authority of the Elders, nor make use of the name of Hillel, nor of Schammai, but spoke in his own name and applied to himself, with sovereign authority, the words of the prophets ; so great were his power and his conviction that, in spite of the novelty of his teaching, even those men who were slaves to formula could not resist the charm of his personal influence.

An unexpected incident occurred which called forth in

Jesus the exercise of a new power, and which increased still more the admiration of the crowd. There was in the assembly a man possessed of an unclean spirit, who cried out suddenly with a loud voice and demanded of Jesus: "What have we to do with thee? Let us alone, Jesus of Nazareth. Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Jesus rebuked him. "Hold thy peace," he said to him, "and come out of this man." The unclean spirit tore him violently, threw him to the ground, in the midst of the people, and went out of him uttering a great cry, but without doing him any harm.

A movement of fear and amazement ran through the assembly. Everyone asked: "What is this? he commands even the unclean spirits with authority, and they obey him."

This scene is the first recorded in the Gospel narrative in which the sovereign authority of Jesus shows itself over the unclean spirit of evil, which invisibly tyrannises over mankind, and which visibly possesses certain men.

According to the teaching of Jesus, evil is not merely a human fact which has its origin in the evil will and in heredity, its occasion in the frailty of the flesh, its punishment in physical infirmities and troubles; it is a fact which transcends the limits of our species and which must be assigned to the spiritual world beyond. Evil, to which mankind is a prey, has its first cause in the instigations of the evil spirits; it is the result of that which is fulfilled in the invisible spheres.

Man not only has an earthly nature, enslaved by his passions, with an egoistical and vain-glorious will which tends to prefer himself to all else; he himself is a spirit of an inferior order, subject to the evil and wicked influences of spirits stronger than himself.

Jesus and his apostles have clearly taught the existence of Satan and his legions, and their influence on man. Jesus speaks often of the Tempter. He calls him ὁ Διάβολος (the Calumniator), ὁ Πονηρος (the Evil One), ὁ Ἄρχων των δαιμονίων (the Chief of devils), ὁ Ἐχθρός (the Enemy), Βεελζεβοὺλ (Baal-Zebub, the name of the Philistine god which the Jews applied to the chief of devils), Σατᾶν or Σατανᾶς (Satan), and Ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τοῦτου (Master of this world). We find allusions to him in the Sermon on the Mount, in the Lord's Prayer, in the Parables, in his discussions with the Pharisees.

He is the strong man armed, whom Jesus comes to bind and to overcome. To him he attributes all great crimes, the incredulity of the Jews, the treachery of Judas, the blindness of the Gentiles, cruel maladies, demoniac possessions, and besetting sins.

When the spirit of God manifests itself in the earth in any part of the human race, the spirit of evil rises in revolt and multiplies its attacks, in order to impede its action. It is a law of history, that the most holy among men, in waging war with evil, indirectly call forth the most violent manifestations of evil. The advent of Jesus was the advent of the Holy One of God, the personal intervention of the Spirit in its divine fulness ; and it was natural that it should excite the most terrible attacks of the spirit of evil and his legions.

It is worthy of note, indeed, that all those demoniacs whose miraculous cure is recorded in the Gospels, were drawn to Jesus by an irresistible force. The spirit which spoke by their mouth never failed to proclaim the Messianic character of him whose sovereign power they dreaded. This was one method of opposing the Prophet, for by calling Jesus the Holy One of God, the Son of David, and lastly the Messiah, they aroused in the minds of the crowd those false ideas which attached to this title, and we know that nothing would be better calculated to impede the work of the true Messiah.

That which struck the Jews of the synagogue of Capernaum with astonishment in the healing of the demoniac, was not so much the fact itself, as the way in which it was performed. Such cures, it seems, were not unknown to them, but they were due to the virtue of the prayers, sacred formulæ, incantations, and invocations, of their exorcists and probably, more often to the accommodation of the spirits themselves.

Jesus did not appeal to any extraneous force, he only had to speak one word ; he commanded, and the unclean spirit passed out subdued ejected by a superior will.

His fame went out into all the country ; the towns of the lake and of the mountain were roused to excitement by the report of the event.

Jesus left the synagogue accompanied by his four disciples, and came to the house of Simon and Andrew, which was near at hand. Peter's mother-in-law was in bed, sick of a fever. His disciples besought him for her ; he drew near,

lifted her up, and took her by the hand ; immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

The event of the morning had stirred all the little town. In the evening, when the sun was set, and the Sabbath day was ended, they brought to him all that were diseased and those that were possessed with devils. All the city was gathered together at the door, and Jesus healed many by laying on of hands, and he again cast out many devils who cried out, " Thou art the Son of God " ; and he rebuked them and would not suffer them to say that he was the Christ.

And in the morning he arose up very early and went out alone to pray in a solitary place. Peter and they that were with him followed him afar off, and the crowd came again to seek him. His disciples having joined him, said : " Master, all men seek for thee.

" And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I forth."

This story, so full of life and yet so soberly and simply told by the two Evangelists, whose words I borrow, gives us a true picture of one day's life of Jesus in Galilee. It enables us to witness the apostolic work of the Master from hour to hour ; we can follow him from morning till evening and see him work and live.

Prayer was his first act. Before sunrise, when all were asleep, he left his house and the town and retired to a lonely spot, far from noise and far from men, seeking silence and solitude to speak in secret with his Father.

The scenery of Palestine is favourable to meditation. The villages and towns are noisy, but the country is silent ; when we leave the houses behind us we find at once the calm of the desert. There is no confused noise like the noise of the sea, or the sounds which are heard in woods. Some unheeded cries there are : the warbling of birds, the neighing of animals, the barking of dogs, and the crowing of the cock ; and, in the night, the howling of jackals, and occasionally the call of human voices. But all these sounds are distinct and isolated, and lose themselves in the silence which pervades the valleys and mountains of Palestine, and add to its great melancholy.

When the disciples joined their Master, they found him in prayer. Then the work of the day began ; they went

into the villages and into the synagogues at the hour of meeting, and Jesus preached the Kingdom of God and thrilled the crowd which was gathered together to hear him.

The house where he was receiving hospitality was soon invaded. All those who were sick were led to the Prophet, and he healed them with a word, with a look, or by putting his hands upon them. The numbers of those who thronged him were so great that he had not time to eat.

Sometimes he returned to the borders of the lake on either side of the town, and entered into one of Peter's ships. The crowd sat along the shore in silence, and he spoke to them from the ship, which was pushed off a little from the land.

At sunset he went again to his dwelling, and even till nighttime he was again besieged by the people. The halt and the blind, the deaf and dumb, the mad, the epileptics, those who were possessed of devils, and those who were sick of divers diseases flocked to him. Never has anyone found himself surrounded by a greater number of those in trouble. No one has ever healed more, nor felt more keenly the joy of doing good. His goodness and his compassion were inexhaustible ; he often said, " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

His days bent under the weight of good works, as a tree laden with ripe fruit. Many asked him to their houses to do him honour and to hear him close at hand. His conversation was always earnest and was full of vivid images and unexpected touches. Truthful souls felt themselves transformed by his voice ; treachery was unmasked and confounded.

At night-time, when all retired to sleep, he still watched for many hours, and sometimes spent the whole night in prayer. The labours of his apostolic work gave him life ; his body, as his soul, rested on the breast of the Heavenly Father.

Such was the life of Jesus during these days in Galilee, which were as the springtime of the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER. OPPOSITION BY THE PHARISEES IN GALILEE

THE journey of Jesus in the neighbourhood of Capernaum was of short duration.

Only one fact is told us of all this journey in the villages bordering upon Capernaum, and this one is no doubt recorded because it helped to spread abroad the fame of Jesus, and because it forcibly struck the imagination of the crowd. This act was the cleansing of a leper.

Leprosy was one of the diseases most feared by the Jews, for they regarded it as a direct visitation of God, and in their curses they desired it only for their worst enemies.

At the outset of the disease, the priest declared the leper unclean, excluded him from all contact with his fellows, and banished him from the town in the company of other lepers. His clothes were rent in sign of grief. The solitude to which he was condemned was not, however, a prison ; he could enter the synagogues of those towns which were not surrounded by walls, but he was placed behind a rail, which isolated him from the congregation ; he was the first to enter and the last to leave.

Leprosy was considered incurable, even the white leprosy, which was the most common form and the least repulsive. When it had spread over the whole body, and the scales had fallen off, and the skin had become white and shining, it was no longer regarded as contagious : the priests could then declare the leper " clean " and restore him to liberty.

It was one of these repulsive sufferers whom Jesus touched and healed. The Master, returning to Capernaum, descended the mountain, followed by a multitude. He stopped on his way at a town where, when the evening had come and the multitude had withdrawn, a leper came to him, threw himself on his knees, his face to the ground, and besought him saying, " Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

He was moved with compassion : taking pity upon such faith bound to such misfortune ; he stretched forth his hand and touched the leper : " I will," he said, " be thou clean."

As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him. Jesus dismissed him then, saying in a tone of authority : " See thou say nothing to any man : but go thy way, shew thyself to a priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

The evident nature of the malady, and the suddenness of the cure, wrought solely by touch and at the will of Jesus, gave to this deed a supernatural and miraculous character. Such acts were frequent, even habitual, during the public life of the Master.

The disease was considered incurable, but, if it had not been so, the instantaneous cure alone revealed in Jesus a divine power commensurate with his goodness. Above the Law, he, in spite of the Levitical prohibition, touched the leper ; such contact could not defile him, who with a word could wipe away all uncleanness. He did not content himself with healing the unhappy man who besought his help, but he made him a witness, his witness. Having charged him not to tell the multitude, whose excitability he both feared and sought to restrain, Jesus sent him to the priests, to Jerusalem, trying again from afar to open their eyes, and warning the Sanhedrin that he whom they had threatened with death as a blasphemer was continuing his work, and that the Spirit of God was with him.

A man cured of leprosy was one of the greatest signs that a prophet could produce ; it recalled Moses and Elisha, one of whom had cured his sister Miriam, and the other Naaman the Syrian. Nothing could contain the transports of the leper's joy ; he went forth and published everywhere all that had happened. Jesus could no longer show himself in the town ; he was obliged to withdraw to a desert place, remote from human dwellings.

He found calm and prayed amid the solitudes.

As soon as Jesus had returned to Capernaum, he was assailed by the people. His absence had increased rather than lessened the general excitement. The report of his return spread rapidly, and as soon as it was known that he

was in the house, the crowd assembled in such numbers that there was neither room in the house nor in the court in front.

Jesus sat in an upper chamber and preached the word. Near him were Pharisees and doctors of the Law, attracted by his growing fame. They were not all from Galilee, for some had come from Judaea, and even from Jerusalem ; they listened rather to judge than to learn. The power of God was suddenly made manifest through an unforeseen incident.

Whilst Jesus was speaking, some men brought one sick of the palsy to lay before him. On seeing how the crowd pressed, and not knowing how to bring him in, they mounted the outer staircase, went upon the house-top, uncovered the roof above the place where Jesus was, and through the opening thus made they let down the bed on which the man with the palsy lay. The energy of their fearless faith touched him : " Son," said he unto the sick of the palsy, " thy sins be forgiven thee." The Scribes and Pharisees were astounded at these unheard-of words, but it was with horror and not with wonder. They held their peace, but their silence could not conceal the anger of their hearts. This is blasphemy, they said to themselves. Who can forgive sins but God alone ? Jesus, who read their hearts as an open book, knew their anxious thoughts. To justify in their eyes his words, the most remarkable, indeed, which ever fell from human lips, and which implied in him who dared to use them the very personality of God, he appealed to his calling, to his Messianic dignity, which it pleased him often to designate by the expression " Son of Man." To forgive sins is an act of divine power. If Jesus assumed this right it was because God was in him, because he was equal to God.

Far from rejecting this conclusion as a blasphemy, he proved it by a miracle. " What reason ye in your hearts ? " he said, in watching the Scribes and Pharisees. " Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk ? "

His questioners, rebuked, held their peace. " Ye must know," said he, " that the Son of Man has power upon earth to forgive sins " ; and, turning towards the sick of the palsy, he said, " I say unto thee, arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house." At these words he rose up before them, took up the bed on which he was lying, and departed glorifying God.

There was a movement of fear in the crowd, as usually happens at the sight of something marvellous.

The cry of praise to God arose at once : " We never saw it on this fashion," said the bystanders. The healing of the sick of the palsy made a greater impression on their minds than did the divinity of Jesus, of which it was a striking manifestation. Jesus was for the crowd, and probably for the educated, to whom it was given to see his power, merely a worker of miracles, a prophet ; and even after this the Pharisees remained hostile.

He went forth, and passed by the shores of the lake, followed by the crowd, whom he taught as he went. But, as he was passing the receipt of custom, he saw sitting there one of the tax-gathers, a publican, named Levi, the son of Alphaeus. " Follow me," he said to him.

This was enough. His word, which had just cleansed the leper, restored the power of movement to the sick of the palsy, and remitted sins, suddenly transformed a publican into a disciple ; the tax-gatherer rose, and, leaving all, followed Jesus.

With the four fishermen, there was now with Jesus a tax-gatherer, one of a class greatly despised among the Jews. The new disciple, a short time after, made a great feast in his house for his Master, and invited his colleagues and friends ; so Jesus found himself among publicans and those whom the Pharisees called sinners. A certain number of these were already his followers.

It was by this class, which was looked upon as sinful and unclean, that the good news of the Kingdom of God was most readily received. Jesus loved it.

The followers of Jesus in Galilee gave scandal to the Scribes and Pharisees. Rigid and inexorable, they did not associate with people who were without religious observances, and whose very contact defiled them ; they looked upon themselves as pure, and they religiously shunned all others.

Some of their number, when they saw Jesus eating with publicans and sinners, could not in their indignant zeal refrain from protesting against this practice. Perhaps these were not the most hostile to Jesus, and they may even have regarded him as a prophet who inspired them with a measure of admiration and fear. Indeed, we see them mingling with the disciples of John, and timidly asking questions, not of Jesus himself, but of his disciples.

" Why," said they, " eateth your Master with publicans and sinners ? "

This question betrayed jealousy and spite that the Prophet should prefer the company of these poor, and, as they would have called them, irreligious, people to their own.

The Master, always on the watch, himself replied to the question addressed to his disciples :

" They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."

Integrity is of more value than ceremonial, and goodness is better than a burnt-offering. Besides, said he, to explain his sympathy with sinners, and to rebuke these self-righteous ones whose pride displeased him, " I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The whole spirit of the Gospel is in these words, in which he revealed himself as one " Sprung from on high and who has proceeded from the mercy of God."

The Pharisees and the disciples of John took advantage of Levi's feast to attack Jesus, and to disparage those who followed him. We fast, said they, in their self-satisfaction, we fast often and make many prayers, whilst your disciples eat and drink.

The spirit of this misconceived religion, which had long since perverted the piety of the Jews, showed itself in this reproach of the Pharisees. Fasting was frequent among them ; the least zealous fasted twice a week, and the others more often, and for the most futile motives. True repentance was quite foreign to these fasters, who often had no other object than to obtain by dint of abstinence self-complacency, good fortune, and success in their worldly affairs.

" Leave them alone," Jesus said in answer ; " they are the children of the bridechamber."

This expression was used by John himself, and it would strike home to the disciples of the Baptist. " Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them ? " Now is the marriage feast, but wait : " the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

" No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the

garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles : else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish : but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

The observances of the law, all the Mosaic ceremonies, are what Jesus meant by the old garment and the old bottles ; the Spirit with which he abounds, the doctrine which he teaches, are the new cloth and the new wine. The old Law is past, it will be transformed ; it cannot contain the Law of the Gospel ; man enlarged by the Spirit needs a wider garment. We see the dawn of the doctrine of the liberty of the children of God, of which St. Paul was to be the apostle.

He had hardly finished speaking when a man named Jairus came towards him. He must have been a Pharisee of some importance at Capernaum, for he was one of the chief rulers of the synagogue. A great misfortune had befallen him ; his daughter, twelve years of age, was dying. The trial was stronger than his prejudices ; he fell at Jesus' feet and besought him earnestly : Master, my daughter is dying ; come to my house and lay thy hands upon her, that she may be healed and live. Jesus arose and followed him, accompanied by his disciples.

The multitude pressed close upon their footsteps. A woman who for twelve years had been afflicted with an issue of blood, and had spent all her substance on physicians, without any being able to heal her, heard of the Prophet and joined the multitude behind him, convinced that if she could but touch the hem of his garment she would be healed. She touched it, and felt herself healed from that very moment. Jesus, knowing that virtue had gone out of him, turned towards the multitude, and asked who had touched his garments.

" The multitude throng thee," said his disciples to him, " and thou dost ask, who touched me ? " He looked round about. The poor woman, trembling, and knowing what was done in her, fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

" Daughter," said Jesus to her, " thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

While he was speaking, word was brought to the ruler of the synagogue that his daughter was dead, and that it was useless to trouble the Master further. Jesus said to Jairus : " Be not afraid ; only believe." Then he dismissed the multi-

tude and his disciples themselves, and allowed no one to follow him, save Peter, James, and John.

When he was come to the house he saw a great tumult. The mourners, with dishevelled hair, were wailing and crying and raising their arms, and wringing their hands, and uttering cries, which mingled with the shrill notes of the flute-players.

Jesus entered and said to the people : " Why make ye this ado and weep ? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." They laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. He sent them all away, and led the father and mother of the damsel with his three disciples into the room where she was lying. He took her by the hand, and said to her : " Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

The damsel arose and walked, and Jesus commanded that something should be given her to eat. The parents were beside themselves with joy, but Jesus charged them to say nothing of what had passed.

As he went out from thence, he also healed two blind men who were brought to him. " Believe ye," said he to them, " that I am able to do this ? " " Yea, Lord."

Misfortune makes faith easy. Jesus touched their eyes, and added, " According to your faith be it unto you," and their eyes were opened. " See," said he, as he sent them away, " that no man know it." As they went out, a dumb man, possessed with a devil, was brought to him ; he cast out the devil, and restored to the dumb man his speech.

All these miracles produced an irresistible effect on the multitude. The people, with growing admiration, and with genuine enthusiasm, cried out, ' It was never so seen in Israel." But the Pharisees, who had witnessed all these miracles, and so could not deny them, misrepresented them by treating Jesus as a sorcerer, and saying, " He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." This blasphemy, which as yet they put forward with fear, was afterwards cast in the teeth of Jesus. To no accusation could he be more sensitive ; it drew from the indignation of his soul the most overwhelming denunciations that outraged love has ever thundered forth.

One or two days afterwards, on a Sabbath, that Sabbath which is called the Second-First, that is, the first of the second

year which followed the Sabbatical year, Jesus was walking through the corn-fields ; his disciples were with him, and as they were walking they plucked some ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. This offended certain Pharisees, who were passing, for, as we have seen, their laws relating to the observance of the Sabbath were of great severity.

" Why," said they, " do ye on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful ? "

Jesus replied : " Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him ? How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests. Do you accuse David and those that were with him ? Do you accuse Ahimelech, the High Priest, who gave him the shewbread ? Why then do you condemn the innocent ? "

Necessity knows no law of ceremony ; if it excuses some it also excuses others. You invoke your law which forbids all work ; but " do not the priests in the temple sacrifice on the Sabbath day ? and yet they are blameless." Know then that " the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Moreover, " The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

Jesus avails himself of the smallest incidents to enlighten his adversaries and to elevate their minds ; he calls them from the letter to the spirit of the Law, and from external ceremonies to upright conduct. He appears so much the more grand and true, as his opponents show themselves more narrow and petty and hollow.

In the face of his astonished adversaries, he asserts most emphatically his sovereign dignity and his Messianic claims. " Holy though the Sabbath be," he added as he dismissed them, " the Son of Man is Lord of it."

It is difficult to imagine anything which could more deeply offend the Pharisees than thus placing himself above the Sabbath, and at the same time above the Law, and above Moses.

This pretension, sacrilegious in their eyes, inflamed their hatred ; they were condemned to hate him whom they did not wish to recognize, and whose signs they obstinately refused to accept. The foregoing events, drawn from the Gospel

narrative, are alone fully sufficient to explain the antagonism which grew up and increased day by day among the Pharisees against the new prophet. They followed his footsteps ; they watched him closely, and longed at all costs to compromise him.

The following Sabbath, he entered into the synagogue to teach. There he found a man whose right hand was withered. The Pharisees and Scribes, seeing his infirmity, raised before Jesus the question of the observance of the Sabbath day. It was an insidious attempt to provoke him, and to find a pretext to accuse him.

With their miserable casuistry, the doctors of the Law, devoid of all pity, taught that it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day : they forbade the application of any remedy, whether of rubbing or anointing. One of the axioms that found favour with this class, which was always mindful of its own interests, had modified the excessive strictness of the Law. " Act," say the wise men, " with mercy towards the goods of an Israelite."

The rabbis, relying on this principle, permitted certain acts on the Sabbath day, to preserve an animal in peril. The lawyers asked Jesus : " Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day ? " They knew his reply beforehand, but they wished to discredit him before the assembly, where their doctrine was held inviolable.

Jesus made use of their own teaching, to put them to confusion. " Who is there among you that having one sheep, if it fell into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not lay hold on it and lift it out ? How much is a man then better than a sheep." Then he said to the man with the withered hand, " Arise, and stand up in the midst ; " and he arose and stood up.

Jesus then said to the Pharisees, " Is it lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbath day, to save life or to destroy it ? answer me." They were silent. Jesus, sorrowing at their blindness, gazed on them with anger. " Stretch forth thy hand," said he to the sick man. He stretched it forth, and immediately his withered hand was restored whole.

Their minds were not enlightened by this miracle ; it served only to put them to confusion, and their confusion turned to venom. Nothing can conquer the obstinacy which wilfully

turns from the light : fanaticism is blind. The religious errors of the Jews in the time of Jesus make us smile, but they were for them the most perfect code of morality : it was sacrilege to touch it. The compassionate wisdom of Jesus, and his wonderful miracles, rather exasperated them than dissipated their prejudices.

After this scene, which so vividly pourtrays them, the Pharisees, more irritated than ever, met in council and considered how to destroy Jesus.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

While the opposition of the educated classes and the rabbis took shape and gathered force, disciples flocked to Jesus in ever-increasing numbers. Many came to Capernaum, from Galilee and Peraea, from the towns of Decapolis and from Jerusalem, from Judaea and Idumaea, from Tyre and Sidon, from Phoenicia and from Syria. There was a general movement throughout the country. People did not wish merely to see and hear him, the sick thrust themselves upon him to touch him, and they were healed at his very touch ; his power shone forth in good deeds.

He was obliged to hide himself, so much did the multitude throng him. In order to escape from them, he told his disciples to keep a boat always in readiness, when he was travelling along the lake.

At the sight of the people his heart was moved with pity, for he saw that they were weary, and scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd. He compared them to a field of corn.

" The harvest truly is plenteous," said he to his disciples, " but the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

During these days he went out to the mountains to find greater peace, and he spent a whole night on one of them in solitude, meditating on one of the most important steps in the development of his work.

The disciples and the crowd followed in his footsteps. At daybreak he called together a certain number of his disciples : they came to him, and he chose whom he would.

There were twelve, grouped two by two ; their names have been carefully preserved by the first three Evangelists. First, Simon, who was called Peter, and with him, his brother

Andrew ; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, whom he called Boanerges, " The sons of thunder " ; Philip and Bartholomew ; Thomas, and Matthew the publican ; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus ; Simon the Canaanite ; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

There was not one rich man among them, nor a scribe, nor a doctor, nor an elder, nor a ruler of a synagogue ; they were all men of no account, unknown even in their own small province. Not one of them had studied ; the most educated was the publican Levi, the only one perhaps who knew how to write ; the others were boatmen, or artisans like their Master. They had nothing, these children of the people, neither fortune, nor knowledge, nor influence, and yet Jesus chose them as his apostles.

" I will make you fishers of men," he had said to Simon, and he kept his promise. He had told his disciples to pray to the Heavenly Father to send labourers into the harvest, and he himself had prayed all night : the Heavenly Father heard his Son, and these were the labourers of the first hour.

The twelve, henceforth, will never leave Jesus. His Spirit will be in them and over them, it will be their strength, their knowledge, and their power ; they will preach the word of the Kingdom, and, for a sanction to their apostolic calling, they will have power given them to heal all infirmities and sicknesses, and to cast out devils in the name of their Master.

All human means, political sagacity, brute force, eloquence, and wealth, were disregarded. No such daring attempt is known to history ; to save the world, Jesus relied on his Spirit alone ; and to make apostles, he had only to imbue them with his Spirit. As soon as the choice was made, he came down from the summit of the mountain with the Twelve and halted in the plain a little below ; the band of his disciples and the multitude, who were waiting, gathered round him.

His heart glowed ; the work of the Kingdom of God had reached a more exalted stage. The newly-chosen apostles rejoiced with a holy joy ; for the gifts of God have the power to stir the heart and elate the spirits. Jesus sat down, his heart warmed, and he opened his mouth and began to teach, and, lifting up his eyes on his disciples, he cried :

" Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

" Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.
" Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.
" Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.
" Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.
" Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.
" Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.
" Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Never yet was presented the ideal of happiness, for which the human heart thirsts, in such thrilling beauty. Happiness is only to be found by participation in the Kingdom of God. Whoever looks for it elsewhere, in riches, in earthly joys and pleasures, in human approbation and glory, looks in vain : he prepares for himself bitter disappointment, hunger of soul, the tears of anguish. But to be comforted by the Heavenly Father, to be satisfied by him, to be pardoned by him, to see him, to become his son, and to feel him reign in us : this is to possess the earth, this is to gain eternal and boundless happiness.

The only road whereby we can enter the Kingdom, is by renunciation of the things of the world, by choosing poverty and humility, by holding fast to nothing. None may possess the Kingdom of Heaven unless he be humble and meek, and unless he have no other will than the will of the Father.

Heavenly joys are reserved for those who have wept, and the fulness of the soul for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. He who would earn the pardon of God must himself show mercy ; he who would see God must be pure in heart ; he who would be called the child of God must be a peacemaker, he must hold aloof from violence, must still hatred and calm the passions, and make brotherly love reign among men, as among the children of the same Father in heaven. Thus, that which would seem the negation of life, becomes its very condition and security.

Poverty, humility, tears, persecution for righteousness' sake, the generous sacrifice of our rights, the rejection of all that disturbs the purity of the heart, the love of peace, the meekness that denies itself all violent resistance ; persecution in this world, where the strong are always ready to crush the weak and

to outrage justice—this is the road that leads to the Kingdom.

The disciples had already taken the first steps ; they left all to follow their Master, and they were now learning from him gentleness and goodness ; their hearts were purified and they felt, through intercourse with him, the hunger and thirst after true righteousness, and they put away violence in the presence of him whom the prophets called the Prince of Peace ; they had already felt persecution, and the sect of the Pharisees on his account, pursued them with its hatred.

Therefore, Jesus dwelt on the happiness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

" Yea, blessed are ye," said he to them, " when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven."

Jesus no longer spoke as a man, but as the Son of God. He is very Righteousness : to suffer for his sake, is to suffer for righteousness' sake, and to win God.

" Besides," added he, " persecution is the lot of the prophets. You are treated as they were." He spoke to them of their great apostolic mission and of their duties.

" Ye are the salt of the earth," said he, " but take heed lest you lose your savour. Salt that has lost its savour is good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world : men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, so that it may give light to all that are in the house."

Thinking of the future of his work and of his disciples, who were now countless in number, he compared them to a city set upon a hill, like that city which is to be seen from Koroun-Hattin, on the summit of the hills of Safed. The mountain is Jesus himself. A city so built cannot be hid.

" Let your light so shine before men, as a torch in the house, that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Jesus, both in his teaching and conduct, distinguished the Law and the prophets from the human traditions, which had been added by the doctors and the schools, especially since the time of Ezra. He submitted himself to the Law, but he would not be fettered by the traditions which he judged, and often condemned, which he rejected as an unnecessary burden.

The Pharisees, who confused the two, could not forgive this assertion of independence. They accused him of upsetting the Law, and they treacherously spread abroad this calumny among the people; they strove to discredit his work, and to impede his action, by opposing the new Master to Moses.

Jesus, to forewarn his disciples, maintained before them the sanctity of the Law and the prophets; he was not come to destroy, but to fulfil; he was no revolutionist, but a divine reformer; the Law which he proclaimed, was to fulfil that which was begun, and make perfect that which was imperfect.

"No," said he in a tone of authority, "I am not come to destroy the Law or the prophets: I am come to fulfil them. For verily I say unto you, heaven and earth shall not pass away till the Law is fulfilled, even to the last letter, even to every jot and tittle; and whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven."

All his conduct confirmed his words. His whole life, both public and private, had no other aim than to realise the Law and the prophets, even to the last letter; and, until the Old Law was realised in its fulness, he would not proclaim the New Law of the Kingdom.

The Old Law is a dead letter, engraved on stone; the New is the living Spirit, his own inspiration. The one exerts its influence from without, the other from within; the one makes slaves, the other free souls; the one terrifies, the other inspires love; the one is without impulse, the other gives strength, even the strength of God; the one lays stress upon forms and symbols, the other touches the substance, the reality; the one promises, the other realises the promise: in one word, the Old Law asks relative perfection only; the New demands absolute perfection.

"Except your righteousness," said Jesus, in addressing his disciples, "shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And he set himself to explain to them, by various examples, and with reference to certain commandments of the Law, the imperfection and error, the formalism and self-will, the blindness and egoism, which betrayed themselves in the

traditions of these hypocritical doctors, who affected such zealous devotion, and merely spoke of righteousness.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; and he shall die the death." The Scribes had discussed the question of murder, the various cases where it was permissible, and the various penalties by which it should be punished; but they stopped at the crime itself, and neglected the unseen cause from which it springs. "But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment of God; whosoever shall say to him, Raca, shall be in danger of the Sanhedrin; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

In the casuistry of the Pharisees, manslaughter was left to the judgment of God; murder fell under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, which punished it with death, and in certain cases added tortures or indignities to the capital punishment. The executed criminal was burnt in the valley of Gihon (Gehenna), a place held in abhorrence by the Jews, because in former times their fathers had sacrificed there and offered their children to Moloch.

By applying these various penalties to inward anger, to expressions of contempt and insult, Jesus wished it to be understood that he condemned not only the outward and brutal act, but even the word and the hidden thought which prompts the word and leads to crime. All evil brings punishment, and justice demands that the punishment should be in proportion to the fault; sin will not be punished by man alone, but it will be avenged by God himself, for it stains the soul of which God alone is the judge.

Therefore "when thou bringest thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Yes, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

As, in sins of temper, sin originates in anger and has murder for its outcome, so, in the case of concupiscence, the sin begins with the guilty desire and leads on to adultery.

The Scribes and Pharisees only considered the visible evil; Jesus struck it at its root: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Evil desire is provoked by opportunity: therefore Jesus commanded men to flee from temptation and to cast it away, in words of inexorable severity: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

The Master concedes nothing to the lower passions; he insists upon absolute purity. The guilty love for a woman, even the smallest secret desire, must be subdued. Jesus makes this the basis of holiness of life and freedom of spirit. The indissolubility of marriage was revived by Christ in all its rigour. Without directly blaming the divorce permitted by Moses, he condemned the abuse of it, which, with the connivance of the Scribes, had crept into practice, and degraded marriage to a polygamy in disguise.

"It hath been said," he added, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement," implying that an act duly drawn up rendered any repudiation lawful and right. "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication," in spite of the writing of divorcement, "causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

It is plain that Jesus does not sanction divorce, but only separation. The marriage contract was to be governed henceforth by justice, and woman, protected by justice, was to escape from the tyranny, violence, or caprice of man.

One of the religious deviations of the Jews was their teaching

concerning oaths. The Law said, " whou shalt not forswear thyself." The doctors held to this with rigour, troubling themselves little about the hastiness or vanity of oaths, but only looking to the truth of that which was sworn.

They even attributed a false piety to the multiplication of oaths on all occasions. They swore by God and by his creatures, but the oath by the creature did not seem to them valid. Their casuistry admitted strange limitations, dictated by interest ; to swear by the Temple and the altar was not binding with them ; but to swear by the gold of the Temple, and by the gift on the altar, bound the conscience.

No doubt these doctors were of opinion that the gold thrown in the " schouperot," and the food offered in sacrifice had acquired, by becoming the property of the priests, a more sacred and inviolable character. Jesus, with a word, put aside all these subtleties, and directed the conscience towards ideal perfection. It is not only perjury that must be avoided, but useless oaths.

" Swear not at all : neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne : nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

The use of oaths implies a want of confidence among men ; it supposes that he who makes the oath distrusts the others, or that the others distrust him. If one believes the word of a man, there is no need to call upon God as a witness, in the ordinary affairs of life. Those who love one another have faith in one another ; the disciples of Jesus love one another, and they have no need of oaths. An oath, for them, would be merely a solemn affirmation of the truth, a testimony to the veracity of God, who cannot err, and to the frailty, the nothingness of man, whose word is always, even with the most holy, subject to error.

A harsh and terrible law weighed on the whole of the ancient world ; on the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans, as well as on the Jews ; the *lex tulionis*. It is mentioned in all the codes. Before the time of Jesus, Sâkya-Muni alone spoke of gentleness.

In the mind of the legislator, this law of iron had for its

aim the restriction, the mitigation of just vengeance ; it was the bridle of the human animal ; but if it struck terror into the evil-doer, it encouraged and stimulated, in individual intercourse, that instinct of retaliation which is so natural and so strong in the offended. The traditions of the doctors had substituted a pecuniary fine for tortures, with the view of mitigating the severity of this pitiless law ; but they left untouched the principle on which the law was based. Jesus tempered justice with mercy, and, in the individual intercourse of men, he discountenanced all spirit of vindictiveness, even under provocation.

" It hath been said by them of old time, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

This is how Jesus converts the tiger into the lamb ; he did not condemn lawful defence, nor the right of punishment, but he raised himself above these, and showed to his disciples the ideal gentleness. Above the natural law of the natural man, he established the law of the children of God. He wishes us to yield to the evil-doer, and not to offer resistance, for resistance can only subdue him, gentleness may convert him ; for gentleness makes martyrs, and martyrs have often touched the heart of their tormentors. This is true conquest and the highest strength. By this divine sign we may recognise the disciples of him who submitted his body to those who struck him, his cheeks to those who smote him, who turned not away from blows and insults, and who was sacrificed without resistance and without a protest, even as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. Such divine teaching has begotten, and still begets from day to day, Christian martyrs ; heroes of perfect gentleness ; wherever it penetrates, it converts the sword into the cross ; man no longer seeks to avenge and to kill, he learns to forgive and to die.

He who does not love, he who has not been transformed by the Spirit of God, may perhaps admire the sublimity of such teaching, but he will not understand it, for its very essence is perfect love. The law of love, in which all others

are contained, was formulated by Jesus. Neither the Gentiles nor the Jews penetrated its depth, for neither the one nor the other learnt to love their neighbour, they did not even understand who was their neighbour.

For the Gentiles, the stranger, the barbarian, was an enemy ; for the Jews, the Gentile was hateful ; whilst the Scribes, the strict doctors, more narrow even than the Gentiles, only called an Israelite, and a pious Israelite, their neighbour ; the heretic, the sinner, the Samaritan, were held in abomination ; they despised them, they hated them. Their piety could not exist without hatred ; to hate was a duty.

Jesus wished to clear away these fatal errors : " Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye do good to those who do good to you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye lend to those from whom ye hope to receive again, what reward have ye ? Sinners also lend, to receive as much again. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the publicans so ? "

" To you I say, Love your enemies, do good, and lend without hoping to receive again. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Love has found its ideal expression on the lips of Jesus. The best among the wise men said, " Listen to thy conscience " ; Moses said, " Be obedient to the commandments of Jehovah, thy God, for he is terrible "; the Jewish doctors, " Respect the traditions of the Fathers and the ' hedge ' raised by them around the sacred laws "; Jesus said to his disciples : " Conscience may lead you astray, the law is a yoke for slaves, the traditions of the elders are full of error. ' Be ye perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.' Let his example be your law ; his Spirit, your strength. Your Father is good : be ye

good also ; he loves evil-doers, his enemies : do as he does, love your enemies."

All these masters, whose whole talk was of righteousness, and who bore themselves proudly as the guides of the people were to Jesus as blind men ; it was to them he referred in the short and significant parable, where he declared them incapable of leading others. " Can the blind lead the blind ? shall they not both fall into the ditch ? The disciple is not above his master. He must strive to be perfect as his master."

Motive is one of the essential elements of true righteousness, for it is the main-spring of our acts ; if the motive is bad, it corrupts the act ; if pure, it elevates it. Unless the motive is good, the best acts are but as vices, they have only the outward show of good. The man who does them has the appearance of virtue, but in the sight of God he is only a hypocrite.

Jesus requires of his disciples that their motives shall be as pure and as exalted as their actions. The greatest sin and one most difficult to eradicate, is a secret pride. Man loves himself more than he loves God ; he ever seeks his own glory, and pursues it, in his incurable vanity, even in his works of religion and piety ; he desires to be seen, applauded, and extolled. Even those who profess holiness do not escape the subtle poison of self-love, and in their case we meet with the more refined forms of pride.

The strictest Pharisees are an example. To be seen of the crowd, to be called masters, and to be thought righteous, was the vice which Jesus never ceased to unmask and to denounce, and against which he forewarned his disciples. " Take heed that ye do not your good works before men, to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

He desired that we in doing good should forget all, both ourselves and others, and look only to the Father.

" Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." They seek their own glory, they have found it ; let them be satisfied with their vanity.

" But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : that thine alms may be in secret," only for thy Father, " and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

The strict Pharisees were ostentatious even in their prayers. They might be seen standing in the synagogues, muttering aloud their phylacteries, and even stopping in the public way, and at the street corners, and in the market-places at the prescribed hour, to say their long forms of prayer. They loved to make a show. Jesus forbade this hollow display of piety. " When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are ; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

" But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee.

" But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

" Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

" After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

" Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

" Give us this day the bread for our subsistence.

" And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

" And lead us not into temptation, but deliver as from the evil one. Amen."

This is prayer in its ideal, necessary, and absolute form. Thus the children of God speak to their Father : it is the voice of perfect love, which loves God and desires his Kingdom and his glory ; the expression of confidence in him who nourishes every living creature ; the cry of gentleness which pardons and which hopes in return the mercy of the Father ; the ardent aspiration of those, whom evil threatens and tyrannizes over, and who have faith in deliverance.

Let these things come to pass, and all will be perfect. There will be no more evil, nor hatred, nor hunger, nor disorder on the earth, but blessing and love, and joy and life, and

peace and concord, in a word heaven ; God in man, and man in God.

Such is the teaching of Jesus. His soul has passed into these words, which express for us in human language the unutterable groanings of the Spirit in every conscience, which has felt his inspiration.

Vanity intruded itself also into the frequent fasts which were in fashion among the Pharisees. They had not only increased their number, but they had intensified them ; they forbade all ablution and all use of ointment ; they covered their head and face with ashes, and made a parade of austerity to gain the admiration of the people. " Do not imitate them," said Jesus to his disciples. " Be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance ; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee."

Jesus insists on the divine motive which should govern our acts and consecrate our duties. His disciple should not look to the world, nor to men, nor to any created thing. No more egoism, nor self-love, no more vain joy and glory ; the Father only and always : it is to him alone we must look, and for whom we must act ; he is hidden in our conscience and in the depths of our being, but he sees, he hears, he rewards, he blesses. Those whom he sees are in the light, those whom he hears have strength, those whom he rewards and blesses have already a foretaste of his Kingdom and his glory.

Jesus wished to raise and to turn the hearts of his disciples to this divine realm, the heaven where our Father dwells ; for just as motive is the mainspring of our acts, so love inspires and rules all our motives. Man is of the earth, covetous, greedy for gain, insatiable for riches, hungry for the pleasures of to-day, eager to enjoy them, to possess them, to heap them up ; and these vain desires ruin and enslave him. Jesus will have us poor in spirit, untrammelled by these vanities, wholly belonging to God, the inexhaustible and secret source of our being, our life, our strength, and our joy.

" Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

He compared love, and motive guided by love, with the eye, which gives us light. The eye is the light of the body, motive is the eye of the soul. "The eye," said he, "is the light of the body: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

There cannot be two supreme loves. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

It would be a mistake to read in the words of Jesus a condemnation of worldly activity, the source of public and private prosperity; he only condemns that inordinate love of the luxuries of this life, which enervates work, and the licence of selfish pleasure. In recalling man to the love of the Father, he but tempers himself anew in the fount of all energy; he sets him free and exalts all his powers.

No more vain cares henceforth; in becoming the child of God, man develops a child-like trust. There is no need for man to trouble himself, for he has a Father who watches, and who watches in secret. The soul of Jesus overflowed with this filial trust.

Nevertheless, Jesus does not demand a supine and passive trust. The love of the Father does not suppress, but rather stimulates spontaneity and initiative, and enlarges their sphere; it breathes into the soul noble desires which call forth ardent prayers. Man relies on himself to realise his petty schemes, but the children of God put their trust in the Father, whose work they do, for they know that all strength without him is in vain, and that nothing befalls but by his will.

In order that they should have this strength, and should enter into the purposes of God, Jesus said yet further to his disciples: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

" For everyone that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

" Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ?

" Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?

" If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ? "

The Father refuses nothing to prayer inspired by the Spirit and sustained by faith. The prayers of his children arouse the love and even the will of God.

One simple and divine command of Jesus contains the whole of our duty towards man ; all human duties are comprised in it : " Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets."

" Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned ; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven ; give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over."

After having set forth these great principles of conduct, Jesus exhorted his disciples to be faithful and to beware of false prophets. He warned them against mere sentiment, which does not lead to good works and to sacrifice, and he revealed to them the invincible strength of those who should found themselves upon his word as upon a rock.

" Enter ye in," said he, " at the strait gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat :

" Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

" Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

" Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?

" Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

" A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

" Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

" Wherefore by their fruits," that is to say by their works, " ye shall know the false prophets."

Fruitfulness is the sign of the tree which God has planted, and of the prophet whom he sends.

" Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

" Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ?

" And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Jesus is the only Master, the only judge ; this he declares solemnly. We must listen only to him, and every living creature will be judged by him. He is the tree of life ; the false prophets are the baneful tree, whose fruit is poison. His doctrine is eternal, unchangeable ; it is the rock on which we must build.

" Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

" And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock.

" And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand :

" And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall thereof."

Gentile wisdom and Jewish morality are here surpassed. What the one saw, as through a glass darkly, Jesus made plain ; what the other only sketched, he completed. No teacher before him but had conceded something to human frailty, and to evil. Jesus wanted no compromise ; he gave the final word for righteousness and holiness. He alone has the right to exact perfection, and to command heroism ; for he alone communicates to frail conscience the energy of God ; he alone delivers mankind from the passions which tyrannise over it, from anger and lust, hatred and vengeance ; he teaches gentleness, austerity, goodness, love ; he transplants

man from the soil where he languishes and dies, and takes him purified to the Father who is in heaven, and who alone can give him felicity and everlasting life.

Sorrow is no longer an obstacle ; it is a means. Those who renounce all shall possess God ; those who suffer shall be the happiest, the gentle and meek the strongest ; the persecuted shall be the victors ; those who hunger after righteousness shall be satisfied, and the hearts pure from all selfishness and lust shall see God. Sacrifice is the lever which will lift up the world. It is the overthrow of human wisdom.

This is the legislative work of Jesus in its absolute beauty. Here is a monument which towers above all else, and which raises Jesus above all other teachers. The critic bows disarmed before its perfect harmony, the superhuman boldness of its design. And the monument has grown with time : Jesus is now reverenced and admired by mankind as he was then by the people of Galilee, and man is directed and encouraged by him, his path marked out, his goal made plain. He is the pyramid erected in the midst of the moving sands of the desert of man's pilgrimage.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE JOURNEY TO NAIN

The Sermon on the Mount stands in the public life of Jesus and in the fulfilment of his Messianic office as an act of absolute authority. As a legislator and as a Master, dependent on no one, he has dictated his law to every conscience, formulated his precepts, and inculcated his Spirit. He did not command in the name of God, as a simple prophet, he spoke in his own name ; he did not repudiate Moses, he supplemented and went beyond him ; but he thrust aside the traditional teaching of the doctors, and brought against it a terrible indictment ; he spoke of himself as the only Master, and to him alone must we listen.

This attitude aroused the hostility of the official world, to whom the new Prophet appeared a mere agitator, and hostility, snares, and threats increased in proportion as his work developed ; it was part of the purpose of God that it should grow in the midst of strife and by strife.

But the Heavenly Father granted to Jesus some days of peace ; he had in his train some pure and trustful souls, who consoled him for the opposition of his enemies by making a demand on his divine power, and by giving him the only joy which he ever sought for among men : to heal the sick, to console the afflicted, to save sinners.

Jesus went down from the mountain, followed by the crowd, who had rejoined him at Koroun-Hattin, and who had been roused to enthusiasm by his words ; he returned to Capernaum, where, however, he only made a short sojourn.

There was, in the town, a centurion, probably a Roman soldier, in the service of Herod Antipas, who had won by his generosity the sympathy of the Jews, and who showed besides an ardent zeal for their religion. He was a good and upright man.

One of his servants, whom he loved greatly, lay dying,

sick of the palsy. He had heard Jesus spoken of; and the healing of the son of another centurion, of the man sick of the palsy, of the man with the withered hand, and the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and many other miracles, had given him confidence. He sent a deputation of elders to Jesus, no doubt the rulers of the synagogue, to beseech him to come and heal his servant. These urgently entreated him, saying, "Do not refuse; he deserves that you should do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he has built us a synagogue."

Jesus went with them, and as he approached the house, the centurion saw him surrounded by his followers. The sight of the prophet evoked in him a feeling of reverence blended with fear, and he dreaded to receive him in his house, so he sent some of his friends to say, "Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

Jesus stopped, full of astonishment. The humility and trust of this Gentile touched him.

"Verily I say unto you," he cried, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

His thoughts, which always extended far beyond the immediate present, pictured in this man the whole Gentile world, which was to do honour to him, whom the Jews should reject.

"Many shall come," said he, "from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then, replying to the friends of the centurion, "Go and say to the centurion, that it shall be done unto him as he has believed."

On their return to the house, the messengers found the servant healed.

A great joy was in store for Jesus the next day. He left Capernaum, took the road from Damascus to Joppa by Tabor

and the plain of Jezreel, and after one or two days' journey he came to a little town called Nain, at the foot of Djebel-Dahy. His disciples accompanied him, and the multitude, as usual, followed his steps. As he was approaching the gate of the city, a funeral procession met him. The man to be buried was an only son, and his mother was a widow. She was accompanied by a crowd of people.

Jesus was distressed at the sight of this woman, and her tears moved him to pity.

"Weep not," he said to her.

Then he approached the bier on which the dead man lay, with his face uncovered, and he touched him. The bearers stopped, and Jesus said in a loud voice :

"Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

The dead man raised himself, sat up, and began to speak.

And Jesus, says the Evangelist, in words of deep meaning and exquisite tenderness, gave him to his mother. The dead man belonged really to him, who had brought him to life, and who had only made him his to give him back again to his mother. There was a shudder of fear in the crowd, and then a burst of joy and thanksgiving, and some cried out, "A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people."

This is the second time that Jesus raised from the dead.

As the Father has the power of life, so also has the Son.

The prophets sometimes exercised power over death, in the name of God, and in the name of Jesus, but they were rather the occasion than the instrument of the miracle, they asked God to intervene and to manifest himself ; but Jesus has power over life and death ; he spoke as a Master, and death was obedient to him as to God.

His power was always at the service of his goodness, and his boundless goodness was always at the service of man. All that dies can come to life again at his word, and in this world of death, where death has been sown by sin, Jesus, by destroying sin, has made life germinate. This young man of Nain is a symbol of those unnumbered souls for whom the Church mourns, and whom the voice of the Saviour daily recalls to the life of God.

Nain is only a miserable village of poor, dirty ragged fellahs, who live in hovels even more sordid than themselves.

Among the ruins of the primitive village may be distinguished the ruins of two mosques, which were once Christian chapels. Nopal-bushes with their spreading green boughs surround the dingy houses, and from among them there rises a small, pure white church. This is the spot where Jesus brought to life the son of the widow.

The miracle at Nain made a great sensation in all the country round, and in the whole of Judaea ; no miracle had produced a greater effect. Opinion seemed overpowered and conquered : it was plain that God was at length manifesting himself ; he was with his people, and the Prophet of Galilee was his messenger.

The report of these events was not long in reaching the ears of John the Baptist. News spread in the East across scattered and novelty-loving populations with extreme rapidity. If there was anyone in the nation who might be expected to follow the career of Jesus with a breathless interest, it was the captive of Herod. No one was waiting with more impatience for the coming of the Kingdom, which he had proclaimed as at hand. From the depths of his captivity, in the fortress of Machaerus, he lived in spirit with him whom he had pointed out as the Chosen One ; he followed him and watched his growing fame. Prisoners were not then cut off from all intercourse with the outside world ; those most severely treated, even those who were kept in chains, were allowed to receive visits from their family and friends. The disciples of John went in and out, giving him full accounts of the work of Jesus, and keeping him informed of the state of public opinion.

Faithful and heroic to the last, John called two of his disciples and said to them, " Go to Jesus and take him this message : ' Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? ' " John, in his powerless position, was ready to efface himself. That which he could not accomplish, Jesus would know how to do ; and he gave him by this message a supreme testimony of confidence, and an opportunity to declare his Messianic character.

We are not told in the sacred writings where our Lord was when the messengers of John came to him.

At the moment when they joined him, Jesus, surrounded

by the multitude, was healing the sick, casting out devils, and giving sight to the blind. The messengers came through the crowd to him, saying, " John the Baptist has sent us to you with this message, ' Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? ' "

The answer was firm and decisive.

" Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see : The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Then he added a word of sorrowful warning, addressed to those who were resisting these signs : " Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

The disciples of John withdrew.

As soon as they were gone Jesus began to speak of their master to the people who surrounded him. There were in the crowd some Scribes and Pharisees, and it was possible that some would give an interpretation to the message offensive both to Jesus himself and to John. He defended his forerunner to the people in a discourse full of energy ; he praised his firmness, his austerity, and his prophetic grandeur.

" What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? " he said to the crowd. " A reed shaken with the wind ? " No, John was no reed. The crowd could not question his energy, his vehemence, his inflexible courage, his resolute character, his love for justice ; these qualities recalled the oak which does not bend rather than the pliant reed.

" Then," continued Jesus, " What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? A man clothed in soft raiment ? " The austerity of the Baptist had impressed the people even more vividly than his energy. He was still in the imagination of the people, with his raiment of camel's hair and his girdle of leather, the type of an ascetic ; he had not the slightest resemblance to those courtiers among the Pharisees and Sadducees, who clothed themselves in sumptuous garments to fawn upon princes.

" They do not live in the wilderness ; they must be sought under fretted ceilings and in kings' houses."

" Then," cried Jesus, repeating the question with increasing emphasis, " What went ye out for to see ? A prophet ? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet." He not only prophesied as others did, but he had himself been prophesied,

His coming was an event which the prophets had foretold. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

"Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." The others only perceived the Messiah from afar; he saw him with his own eyes; he showed him to the people, and prepared the way for him. But, notwithstanding his greatness, "the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he," for, incorporated with the Messiah, he partakes of the fulness of the Spirit, and enters into the joys of the Kingdom of whose advent John had been the constant witness. "The Law," with its symbols, all "the Prophets," with their oracles, "even to John," who was the chief among them, prepared the way, announced and foretold the long-expected Kingdom and "from the days of John even to this day, the crowd thrusts forward to enter the Kingdom and the violent take it by force. The gate is narrow, and must be stormed.

"And do not say that the Kingdom of God will not come until after Elias has appeared, as the prophet Malachi foretold; for if you would understand the hidden meaning, the Elias which was to come is John.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

The report of the words of Jesus must have reached the ears of the prisoner, and we can imagine his indescribable joy, in learning that these words concerning him had fallen from such lips.

All the people, publicans and sinners, by receiving the baptism of the Forerunner, had justified God's wisdom and had forwarded his purposes: whilst the Pharisees, thinking themselves above reproach, and rejecting the baptism of John, had despised his counsels in their hearts.

The same thing happened with regard to Jesus. The poor, the insignificant, and the sorrowful, hastened to him, receiving his teaching and claiming his benefits; but the learned, the elders, and the rulers, hardened in their formalism, and immovable in their traditions, were offended; they resisted and argued and closed their hearts. This pride, their self-righteousness, their self-complacency, were in his eyes the great obstacle to the Kingdom. To show this proud spirit in its true light and to confound it in the Pharisees,

his own adversaries and those of John, he said : " But whereunto shall I liken this generation ? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, playing at weddings and funerals, and who say to one another, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. John came, neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man comes eating and drinking, and you say, Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Both these things offend you : austerity and simplicity of life. " But wisdom is justified of her children."

A touching scene proved it, for all the words of Jesus are verified. His teaching and his deeds, blended together with divine art, throw light the one upon the other.

A certain man named Simon prayed Jesus to come and eat with him at his house. He was one of those Pharisees, who, not recognizing the Prophet as the ideal Messiah of whom their religion taught, regarded him with mistrustful curiosity. Jesus was received without any mark of honour ; no water was brought to him to wash his feet ; no kiss was given ; no oil was poured upon his head. He entered as an ordinary guest, went to the table, and reclined on one of the couches, which were placed, according to custom, for the guests.

" And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that he was at table in the house of Simon, entered into the room where all the guests were.

" She brought an alabaster box of ointment. She came to Jesus and stood behind him at his feet, and began to wash them with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

" Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying. This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him : for she is a sinner.

" Then Jesus, answering his thoughts, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. Master," replied Simon, " say on.

" There was a certain man which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when

they had nothing to pay he forgave them both. Which of them will love him most ?

" Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

" Then turning to the woman, who was kneeling at his feet, he said, Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet ; but she, she hath washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

" Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven : for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, loveth little.

" Then Jesus said to the woman, Thy sins are forgiven.

" And they that sat at meat with him were astonished, and filled with horror, and they murmured within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins ? "

" But Jesus said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."

This sinner, whose name has been withheld by the Evangelist, through a sense of delicacy and reserve, has been recognized by almost unanimous tradition as Mary Magdalene.

She was a member of a rich family. Her brother Lazarus possessed a great wealth at Jerusalem ; her sister Martha lived at Bethany, and she herself had lands in Galilee and lived on the western shore of the lake at Magdala : hence her surname Magdalene. We are not told whether she was free, married or a widow. Of her youth the memory of her sins has been perserved. She was one of those who are carried away by their heart and passion, and who sacrifice everything to them, even honour. Her life of shame was notorious.

We do not know what passed in the soul of Mary Magdalene, nor the nature of her inward conflicts. We do not know how the divine ray, which was to save her, penetrated her conscience. But a day came when her eyes were opened and, she recognized in Jesus the Saviour who pardons. On that day she hesitated no longer. Such natures as hers do not stop half-way ; their greatness is shown in pressing onward to the goal with all their strength, whether for good or evil. She

wished her repentance to be as open as her sin. He who loves does not stay to reason ; he is obedient as a slave to the feeling which rules him ; and this woman, who braved opinion to follow her earthly passions, once more set it at nought to throw herself at the feet of Jesus.

Having heard that he was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee, and feeling herself urged by an irresistible force ; she longed to confess to him her sorrow, she burned to express her repentance and her sorrow, her love and her faith, and to hear words of mercy and pardon. No one knew of the drama which was the very crisis of her life ; she was still to all a lost and fallen woman.

She entered, veiled and silent, not even seeing the disdainful looks of the guests who, in their sanctimonious pride, were offended and shocked at her presence. She went and stood behind Jesus, holding in her hand a box of alabaster filled with ointment.

The greatest honour which could be paid to a man, or a prophet, in the East, was to break one of these fragile vessels and to pour the precious contents upon his head and feet.

Mary said nothing, for silence is the sign of an overflowing heart ; no word escaped her lips ; she was overcome by her sorrow and by the love that God had shown her. But in her attitude of humiliation, her tears, her kisses, her streaming hair, there was an eloquence that is beyond the reach of words.

She sees in Jesus not only a prophet to be revered, but the Son of God to be adored. She does not come before him, as the multitude, to beg for earthly benefits ; she comes to implore him who can heal and purify and transform the soul. Never did repentance shed such tears ; never had repentant love such tenderness and such longing after pardon ; never did tears and perfumes symbolize such lively faith, such intense devotion. In Mary Magdelene may be seen the perfect type of the convert ; and he by whom such feelings were inspired and welcomed is no mere man ; under the form of humanity he is the incarnation of beauty and infinite goodness.

To forgive sins is the privilege of God only. It is faith in God alone that saves the lost soul, and it is beyond man's power to give pardon, as it is to give peace. Jesus only can

say these things and bring them to pass. Those alone can understand them, who, like Mary Magdalene, have heard and proved them in the depth of their conscience ; the rest, who, like the Pharisees, neither believe nor love, are offended in their blindness, and murmur at it. But Jesus is justified of his elect.

Henceforth, the sinner can take courage ; his wretchedness is no longer beyond hope. Evil has found a master ; man has only to believe and repent to overcome it. Low as we may have fallen, we have tears and faith still left us ; let us imitate the sinner Mary, and fall weeping at the feet of Jesus.

Tens of thousands of souls have arisen from degradation in the footsteps of the sinner of Magdala. She has thrown open the path, and leads on the procession of the converted and restored among women. She personifies mankind, once lost in vices, which has found at the feet of Jesus that God whom she should love, and whose love transfigures her, and gives her mercy and peace. The scene of the feast in the house of Simon is for ever being repeated, like all else in the Gospel history. The Pharisee, defiant even in good intentions, has not changed ; he is always with us, unable to understand the God who pardons, and the repentant soul which expiates and adores. But by the side of these obstinate ones, hard of heart and stubborn of spirit, we can see and admire the souls that love and faith have saved. The tears of the Magdalene flow on unceasingly ; the perfumes are ever poured upon the Son of Man ; he is adored from century to century, and ceases not to speak to men the encouraging and consoling words : Many sins are forgiven to them who have loved much. Your faith have saved you ; ye who weep, ye who believe, ye who love, go in peace.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE days which followed the arrival from Nain and the striking conversion of Mary Magdalene, were spent in preaching the Gospel to the people.

The activity of Jesus as a preacher was untiring. He went, says the Evangelist, from city to city, from village to village, everywhere preaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. He travelled with the Twelve, without rest or respite. Jesus possessed nothing, neither treasures, nor lands, nor houses ; absorbed in his divine work, he took thought neither of food nor raiment. But the Father provided him with all things ; he it was who called to the honour of serving him certain women, whose perfect devotion to him was transfigured by faith, and increased a hundredfold by love. Many of them had been healed by Jesus of their infirmities ; and gratitude, a sentiment so natural to woman, made them his faithful servants. At their head, after the mother of Jesus, was Mary Magdalene, the penitent. Joanna, whose husband, Chuza, was the steward of the tetrarch Herod, as well as a certain Susanna, of whom nothing is known but the name, are also mentioned among them. These watched with tender solicitude over the Master and his disciples ; they were the providence of the little community ; rich and generous, they placed their goods at his service ; defraying the expenses of the journeys, preparing the food, and selecting the dwellings whose hospitality Jesus and his followers were to receive.

Capernaum, and the lake on whose borders it stands, continued to be the centre of his journeyings. Thence he departed and thither he returned, bringing back with him, from the different countries into which he travelled, a numerous and enthusiastic following. As the scene of his discourses to the multitude, Jesus chose the high and solitary mountain, the clear and tranquil lake. The Gospel of the Kingdom was proclaimed from the summits of the hills, and from a

fisherman's boat. The walls of a synagogue were too narrow for the grandest teaching to which the world has ever listened ; it had need of the open air, the solitudes with their echoes, the sea with its murmuring waves.

When he departed from Nain, Jesus returned to Capernaum ; according to his custom, he retired to the sea-shore, and the people soon gathered around him. Then he entered the ship, which his disciples always kept in readiness for him, and while the multitude remained on the shore he began to teach them.

" Behold," he said to them, " a sower went forth to sow ; and whilst he sowed some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate them up.

" And other some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth ; and they sprung up immediately, because they had no deepness of earth ; and when the sun was up they were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away.

" And others fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them :

" And others fell upon good ground, and they brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold."

Then he warned his hearers not to take his words in their literal meaning, but to endeavour to comprehend the lesson hidden in them, saying, " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Jesus respected the guiding power of conscience ; he did not seek to subdue it by force, he called to it gently. It is the part of conscience, helped by the grace of God, to respond ; to open itself to the light ; to pledge its good will by a first effort. This exercise of faith is for man the beginning of salvation ; by it he merits the justice of God. The disciples, eager as they were to understand, did not always succeed in grasping the meaning of the Master's teachings ; and while the multitude withdrew without seeking the light, they went in secret to question the Lord.

" Ye do not comprehend this parable," Jesus said unto them, gently reproaching them with their lack of understanding ;

" if ye understand not this, which is so plain, how shall ye understand the others ? "

Jesus does not say that he is the sower, but he leaves it to be understood. No other metaphor could express his office so exactly, and with so profound a significance. He alone possesses the seeds of eternal life, and he holds them in his hand. The greatest among men sow only for death : Jesus sows for eternity. Nothing is more living than the seed ; it is the centre and the source of life. The word of God, in the soul, is the beginning of its spiritual life. Just as the seed is at once matter and force, the word is a sensible sign, an incarnation of the Spirit of God.

" The seed fallen by the wayside," said Jesus, " which the birds carried away, are they who hear the word with a dry and shallow heart ; the wicked one cometh and catcheth it away. And he who received the seed upon stony ground, is he that heareth the word, and immediately receiveth it with joy : yet hath he not root in himself, but is only for a time : and when there arise tribulation and persecution because of the word, he is presently offended."

The root of the soul is God ; the profundity of the soul comes from him ; its life flows from his Spirit. The soul which seeketh not God has no depth. What is sown in it " is scorched by the first rays of the sun, by the fire or tribulation. And the seed sown among thorns are those whom the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts after other things have mastered, choking the word and making it fruitless. And these are they who are sown upon the good ground, who hear the word, and receive it and guard it in a pure and upright heart and practise it patiently."

Virtue is the fruit of doctrine ; in some it produces thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundredfold.

Nothing is more hidden, more mysterious, than the seed ; nothing humbler or more secert than the divine word. The one is revealed by its fruit, the other is glorified by virtue. The soul is enlightened by the works of the Spirit : love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, longsuffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity.

In relation to the virtues of disciples, Jesus said to them, " You shall be the light of God. Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed ? and not to be set on a candlestick ? "

The father brings all things to perfection and to the light.

" For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest, neither was it made secret but that it may come abroad."

This universal law has found its fullest application in Jesus and his work. The Spirit concealed in him, the truth hidden under his parables, the Kingdom of God so humble and so little known of the world, confined at first to the souls of a few despised men, have filled the earth with their splendour, their power, their virtue.

This indestructible vitality of the Kingdom is represented by Jesus in another parable :

" So is the kingdom of God," he says, " as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit ; first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear."

The virtue of God acts myteriously in the soul of every creature, bestowing upon it growth and strength ; and it is not in the power of man to hinder that which God sows and nourishes.

The sowing of the seed was a favourite metaphor with Jesus ; it recalled to him his work. Nothing had ever a humbler origin ; nothing has risen to so great a height.

" Again, to what shall we compare the Kingdom ? To a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds ; but when it is grown, it is greater than any herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

This is indeed the fitting symbol of the Church of Christ, this grain of mustard seed become the giant tree, whose branches cover the earth and tower over all things. The greatest geniuses, those eagles upborne on soaring pinion, fatigued with their flight, and weary of their wisdom, have come, century after century, to repose in the shadow of the doctrine of Jesus, which alone satisfies, comforts, and enlightens. That which Jesus saw and prophesied, his first disciples could only believe and hope for ; but we of a later age, more fortunate, behold it. The work of Jesus is the prolongation of his personality ; time separates us from the one, but gives us possession of the other.

He expressed the same thought under another image,

comparing the "Kingdom of heaven to leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

The true leaven is the Spirit of God; the woman is the Church; and the meal, the people. Insipid in itself, mankind takes its savour from contact with the Spirit, which gradually penetrates and transforms it.

The Kingdom of God in this world has not yet attained its full perfection. Good and evil dispute with each other the possession of the earth, and side by side with the great sower who sows the good seed, the enemy sows the tares, and the two grains grow together in the same field.

"The Kingdom of heaven," he said, "is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

"And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, there appeared also the tares. Then the servants of the master of the house came and said unto him, Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? And he said to them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, No; lest while you gather up the tares ye root up the wheat also; let both grow until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

The disciples had not understood the hidden meaning of the tares sown in the field. The Master explained it to them when they were alone:

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

"And the field is the world.

"And the good seed are the children of the Kingdom. But the tares are the children of the wicked one.

"And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

"Even as tares therefore are gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that work iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

" Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Each of these sentences of Jesus is grand, sublime in its simplicity ; they embrace all things, and describe in vivid outlines his great work, from its origin to its eternal consummation. The strife between good and evil is willed of God : the servants of the Master should accept it with resignation. Anger, so natural to man, impels the well-disposed to root up the tares. Jesus teaches us to tolerate evil, lest, in tearing it up with violence, we should destroy the good also ; he should imitate the Heavenly Father in his infinite patience.

The hour will come when the wheat and the tares shall be separated by the power of God ; an hour at once terrible and comforting, terrible to the wicked, comforting to the children of the Kingdom.

Jesus, looking to the consummation of his work, saw from afar his own glory, the glory of his disciples, and the terrible condemnation by his Father of those who should turn away from him. He would frequently pourtray to the multitude such visions, brilliant or gloomy, of the world to come ; they are wholesome, for they fill the mind with terror and hope : terror, which is the curb that restrains man from evil ; hope, which is the spur that urges him towards God.

It was this idea which inspired him with the parable of the net :

" The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, gathering together of all kinds of fish, which, when it was filled, they drew out, and, sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world : the angels shall come forth, and shall separate the wicked from among the just ; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It would be difficult to over-estimate the zeal of Jesus in enlightening the Galilaean people, and teaching them his doctrines. His discourse abounds in vivid images.

" Would you know what the kingdom of heaven is like ? " he said to them. " A treasure hidden in a field, which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

" Again, the kingdom of heaven," he said, " is like unto a

merchant seeking goodly pearls : who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had, and bought it."

And man must indeed give up all things if he would possess God. Only at the price of all he has can he purchase the pearl and the field and the treasure which is there concealed. The timid and the selfish draw back, unwilling to impoverish themselves to obtain the riches of the Kingdom ; one will not give up his pleasures, and he loses the joys of God ; another holds to his narrow science, and cannot enter into eternal truth ; another cherishes worldly ambition, and rejects the grandeur of the life eternal reserved for the children of God.

The whole teaching of Jesus, with its essential traits, is contained in his parables.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the central ideal of all the teachings of Jesus, the idea which always moved the masses most powerfully. The multitude were far from grasping the profound significance of his parables ; they perceived only the outer shell, as it were, the exterior signs, and all that could flatter their prejudices or appeal to their interests. The miracles especially dazzled them ; the doctrines themselves did not enlighten them. The multitude have something of the child in them ; they are more impressed by power than by wisdom, and even when they admire the teaching of Jesus, the Scriptures lay stress upon this, it is his power which astonishes and subjugates them.

" Behold," he said, " he teaches them as one having authority, not as the Scribes and Pharisees."

Yet Jesus undertook the difficult task of preaching the Gospel to them, and opening their conscience to the truth.

No popular orator can ever be compared to him, even in point of eloquence. He stands at the head of that select and saintly few who have received from God the power to move the people without appealing to their earthly passions. He never made use of the slightest sophism, he never deviated in the slightest from the truth ; he could show consideration, without flattering them, for the weaknesses of those who heard him ; he always suited his discourse to his hearers, employing one form of speech with his apostles in the familiarity of private intercourse, another with the Pharisees and the learned, and yet another when he addressed the multitude.

To his disciples he opened his heart, whence flow truths,

eloquent and tender ; addressing the learned, he appeals to the Scriptures, he confounds them by the irresistible logic of his arguments, and rebukes their hypocrisy by his crushing anathemas ; to the people he expounds his doctrine veiled in parables.

In adopting the form of the parable, Jesus penetrated the very law of human intelligence, the law which best responds to the nature of the Master, as well as to that of the disciples. But these laws being immutable, they communicate their immutability to the forms which they consecrate.

Hence, among other causes, the eternal youth of the parables of the Gospels.

The method observed by Jesus in teaching the people shows his exquisite prudence. He who came into this world to bear witness to the Truth, loved it even unto death. His every word breathes discretion and moderation. He never threw pearls before swine, nor gave that which is holy unto the dogs. His love for his people, for his country, for the race that he desired to redeem, shines on every page of his life. He knew their weakness, their prejudices, their ignorance, their hardness, their incapacity ; and he had compassion for them. He was patient, for he knew that his Gospel and his doctrine, destined to enlighten coming ages, would require ages to penetrate the minds of men and regenerate the world.

The disciples wondered at the mystery in which the Master, in addressing the multitude, always enveloped his teaching. The cause of this disguise they did not perceive. It is seldom that the wisdom of God does not shock the reason of the man who dares to judge it by his own light.

" Why speakest thou unto them in parables," they said to Jesus when they were alone, " while to us thou speakest without images ? "

It may be that this question was inspired by zeal. The disciples must have desired the glory of the Lord, and in their impatience they may have wished to behold him dazzle and enthral the multitude by the splendour of his teaching.

Jesus answered them : " To you who believe, to you who love me, it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of heaven ; to them who will not believe, to them who are without, it is not given." Their attention is attracted by the

symbol, " therefore speak I to them in parables." To believe is the beginning of wisdom ; to doubt is the cause of spiritual darkness.

" To him that hath," this beginning of wisdom, " shall be given in full measure ; and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."

Faith attracts the gifts of God, but unbelief dries up the source from which they spring. Once abandoned to himself, once deprived of the divine strength by which our life is multiplied an hundredfold, our virtues fructify, our whole nature is ennobled, man plunges little by little into error, which is the death of reason, and into vice, which is the death of the soul ; the mind is darkened, the heart is oppressed, the will is weakened, the conscience is rendered stubborn.

" Therefore it is," adds Jesus, " that I speak in figures, so that those who are unworthy, seeing shall perceive not, and hearing shall hear and understand not. I fulfil thus the word of Isaiah, prophesying to this people, You shall hear with your ears, and shall not understand ; and seeing, you shall see and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and their ears have grown dull of hearing ; and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

This is an appalling sentence.

It is no longer the vengeance of God ; it is his love that this people fear ; they fear to see, fear to hear, fear to understand, fear to be converted, fear to be healed by God ; therefore it is that they shut their eyes and turn away from him.

Evil must be attended by its fatal consequences. When man in his obstinacy has reached a certain point of degradation, he seems no longer worthy of conversion : God, his mercy exhausted, leaves him to himself, and the most terrible punishment of the sinner who has so long provoked him is the hardening of the heart against the last appeals which save those predestined to salvation.

But even the hardened and stiff-necked are sometimes overcome by goodness. Even such as have crucified Christ or massacred his disciples, can fall vanquished at their feet, and be regenerate by the merits of their blood, for the love of God is a fire which renders the soul malleable, though it were as

hard as granite. However heavy the hand of divine justice may press upon the human race, the last word of the divine government is not justice, but mercy.

It was in this spirit that Jesus added :

" But blessed are your eyes, because they see ; and your ears, because they hear.

" For verily I say unto you, Many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them."

Incomprehensible in the mouth of man, these words are natural from the lips of Jesus ; they express the consciousness which he had of his divinity ; those who see him are blessed ; those who hear him are enlightened.

We can imagine how close must have been the intimacy among the Twelve, gathered around the Master in the upper room, when at night, the multitude having dispersed, Jesus, resting from his labours, opened to them treasures of wisdom and holiness of which the world knew not.

In the confidence of this peaceful hour he opened to them his heart. No profane or indifferent intruder, no stranger was a restraint upon their intercourse. The disciples could ask all things, and Jesus could tell them all things ; he allowed those simple and unsophisticated souls to see into his heart, and, as one of the Evangelists says, he explained to them everything ; his condescension was, like his tenderness, boundless ; it had the patience of a father.

When he had spoken he would ask his disciples : " Have ye understood all these things ? " and they, entranced, would answer : " Yea, Lord."

One day, speaking of their calling him Master, he said to them :

" The true Scribe who has a knowledge of the Kingdom of heaven is like the master of a house who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old."

He understands the wants of his children and supplies them. Human knowledge is poor and weak, at times harsh ; it has the key neither to our past nor our future. To the mind hungering after eternal truth it has no nourishment to offer ; and if for a moment it can distract a suffering heart, it has never consoled one. It is absorbed in the study of the phenomena which mark the changing face of this world ;

and though it may attain to a perception of a first cause, it can never elevate to it our restless and unquiet nature.

Christ is the divine treasure on which mankind may draw without ceasing ; like all things which are eternal, he is at once old and new ; he responds to all that has been, all that is, all that will be : he possesses the key to the past, to the present, and to the future. Ask of him truth, and he will teach it ; vital strength, and he will communicate it ; consolation, and he will pour it upon you abundantly ; hope, and he will make it dawn before you ; bliss, and a very outcast though you be, he will give you a foretaste of its ineffable sweetness.

Man has no longer the right to complain ; his destiny is a noble one. What matter his miseries and his wants ! it is sweet to feel their stimulus, for there is one to relieve and supply them. What he sought with most ardour and most anguish, what was for ever escaping him ; life and happiness, life which fears no death, true happiness, which trial does but augment ; these priceless benefits are henceforth within his reach ; it depends only upon himself to ask them from Jesus, to live and be happy.

## CHAPTER XVII

SUPREME INSULT OF THE PHARISEES MIRACLES IN GALILEE.

PUBLIC preaching by the lake marked the culminating point of the apostolic work in Galilee.

In a few weeks the whole mass of the country was stirred ; nothing could neutralise the divine influence of the new Prophet. The crowd, in spite of its prejudices, could no longer resist, when brought face to face with the power of his word, the number and splendour of his cures and miracles. Convinced by what it saw, it proclaimed in Jesus the Son of David, greeting him by the title of the expected Messiah. From all parts, those who sought the Prophet flocked to Capernaum, which became illustrious among the little towns of Zebulun and Naphtali.

But in proportion as the movement spread among the people, all the evil passions which are stirred up at the coming of a man of God, spite, jealousy, uneasiness, offence, threats, insult and hatred, gathered strength among the chiefs, the elders, the scribes and the Pharisees. Jerusalem, which remained the centre of the opposition, never lost sight of the movement nor of him who caused it. Emissaries were sent by the Sanhedrin with the command to keep watch over Jesus and to undeceive the crowd.

But a popular movement cannot be stopped by a few doctors ; even force does not always succeed. Those who possess power and employ it in the service of a wornout tradition, never rightly estimate either the forces which they are fighting against or those which they employ, and their illusions are the cause of their fall.

It seems that it was the standing order to speak slightingly of Jesus, and to compromise him in public opinion. Calumny is the favourite weapon of hatred ; it delights to insult while waiting to destroy.

The Pharisees of Galilee, like those of Jerusalem, could not dispute the extraordinary power of the word of Jesus, nor

cast doubt upon the prodigious miracles, the fame of which resounded on all sides : the healing of those who were sick, the raising from the dead, and the casting out of devils. They did not even dream of doing so. If they had been sincere they would have followed the example of the people and added their acclamations to theirs ; but to acknowledge Jesus was to condemn themselves ; to hail in him the messenger of God was to abdicate.

It was then that the Pharisees hurled against Jesus, in the crowd, the most cruel insult and the most odious blasphemy.

" It is not God that is in him," said they, " it is the devil. The spirit of evil directs him, and in the name of Beelzebub he casts out devils."

They had already called him a friend of publicans and sinners, a man who rejected their observances, a lover of wine and of good living, a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and one who despised the ancient teachers ; now they say he is a magician, one possessed of a devil. Jesus remained calm, he asserted the truth in all its intensity ; but he replied to the insult with terrible severity. A more inexorable word never fell from his lips, to repulse outrage and to denounce hypocrisy.

Jesus reminds his insulters of the most simple laws of wisdom and reason, and penetrating, as usual, the very secrets of their hearts, he shows them why they transgress these laws, and declares openly the hidden source of their blasphemy. As " the tree is known by its fruit," he cried, " so is the heart of man revealed by his works. A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit." My works are good, they could not proceed from Beelzebub. The devil is evil, he could not bring forth good works.

" O generation of vipers, how can ye speak good things ? " That which you see and hear does not move your stubborn hearts, and " out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But account must be given of every word spoken, even the idle words, at the day of judgment. " Your words will justify you or they will condemn you." Some words are quite as criminal as deeds, for they give offence, they scandalise, they corrupt, and they kill ; those of the Pharisees, to which Jesus refers here, are like the viper's sting. There is no doubt that they influenced the crowd which heard them, and those to whom the enemies of Jesus reported them. Those who

were indifferent or hostile to the general enthusiasm welcomed them, and it was among these that calumny made its way and did its fatal work.

Some regarded the extreme earnestness of the Master as fanaticism, and his work as madness. The sublimity of his teaching was beyond them. His constant activity in preaching the word, the thronging of the crowd around him, the nights spent in prayer, the days in healing the sick, his house assailed so that he could with difficulty find time to take food ; in a word, his whole existence so instinct with the Spirit, and so far removed from commonplace conditions : all these things were little understood.

He was blamed even by his own family, and some of his brethren boldly treated him as a madman, a demoniac, a fanatic.

They wished to draw him away from the crowd, and to take him with them far from the uproar, where, as they said, he was beside himself.

A short time after the violent scene, when Jesus treated the emissaries of the Sanhedrin with all the indignation of a man deeply wounded on those points which he held most sacred, the people pushed into the house which the emissaries had just left and sat round him. The earnest faith of these lowly men comforted him, after the blasphemy of the great and their arrogant science. It is to be remarked as a law in the life of Jesus, and one which has prevailed ever since, that every insult offered by those men who are led away by their reason and by hatred, calls forth in the people an increase of love and confidence.

The joy of the Master was to see his Spirit shine forth. He felt it to the full when they came and said to him, " Master, behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee."

We may feel sure, that the mother of Jesus was not one of those who judged him in their miserable wisdom ; we must suppose that her solicitude for her son led her to him, to comfort him in the struggles of his apostolic work. Jesus replied, " Who is my mother, and who are my brethren ? " and, looking around on those which sat about him, he said, " Behold my mother and my brethren ! For whosoever shall listen to the word of God and do his will, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother."

On the evening of one of the days when Jesus had taught the people in parables on the shores of the lake, he said suddenly to his disciples, " Let us pass over unto the other side."

The events which were about to occur seemed arranged by Providence to confirm the faith of the disciples, by making the sovereign power of Jesus shine forth. The more he is attacked by men, the more does the Father exalt the glory of his Son and reassure those who share his destiny.

The disciples obeyed ; they sent away the crowd of listeners who were sitting on the shore, set sail, and took Jesus even as he was in the ship. Other little ships were also with them. A great tempest arose, and the wind drove the waves into the ship, so that it began to fill. But he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep with his head upon a pillow. The disciples, terrified by the storm, awoke him : " Master, save us ! we perish."

" Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? " said Jesus to them.

Then he arose, and as if nature were animated by some mysterious spirit, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea : " Peace, be still."

At his word the wind and the waves were stilled, and there was a great calm.

" How is it that ye have no faith ? " said Jesus to his disciples. They were seized with fear ; and, looking at one another, they said with wonder mixed with terror : " What manner of man is this ? He commands the wind and the sea, and they obey him."

The ship, with Jesus and his disciples on board, assailed by wind and waves, Jesus asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, the terrified disciples crying to their Master, " Save us, we perish ! " he, always calm, in the midst of the tempest, reproaching them for their fear, as if one could ever fear so near to him ; his word more powerful even than the raging storm and sea, commanding the wind to be silent and the waves to be calm ; the sudden, complete, absolute tranquillity which followed ; and the admiration mixed with fear, prompting the cry of faith in him who is stronger than nature : this whole incident, with its vivid details, has become a popular symbol of the work of Jesus. The Church is Peter's ship, which bears Christ and his disciples. It will go, on the evening

of the last day, to the eternal shore, crossing this world where the tempest rages. Jesus, unseen, seems to be asleep, prayer awakes and arouses him ; he shows himself and grieves that we should have been afraid ; his presence is the pledge of our peace. He can command events as well as the tempest and the waves, he can control them whenever he will with an all-powerful word. From the sea which he calms there rises a cry of adoration, and by it we may track the course of the ship through the silence of the world.

Jesus has the strength of God ; he is the master of human passions and of their angry waves, which have no power to sink the Church of God.

The ship, after the tempest, reached without further difficulty the eastern shore where Jesus wished to disembark. He landed in the country of the Gerasenes, a little beyond the ancient Gerasa. This small town, situated at one end of the Wady Es-Semak, was part of Decapolis. The mountains of the valley extend on the right and on the left, and rise precipitously above the lake to the height of the plateaux of Gaulonitis. They are pierced with caves which are used as tombs. The ruins of Gerasa remain under the name of Kersa. The old basalt walls of the tumbled-down houses, levelled to the ground, are still to be distinguished.

The ruins of a castle, which guarded the road to the shore of the lake, in front of Kersa, form a little hill which is covered by the bushy branches of a sturdy terebinth. Bedouins encamp around, their black tents spread in the midst of the green grass ; their flocks wander about the valley and on the hillsides.

At the very moment when Jesus went ashore, immediately there came to him, out of the tombs which cover the hills, a man of terrible aspect. He lived among the tombs ; no man could bind him, not even with chains ; he was the terror of the whole country. Though often bound with chains, and his feet in irons, he had always plucked asunder the chains and broken the irons in pieces, and without resting, he wandered day and night on the lonely mountains and in the tombs, crying, tearing his garments, and cutting himself with stones.

This violent madness was aggravated by demoniac possession. The whole story is otherwise inexplicable. Seeing

Jesus coming from afar, he ran to him, fell down before him, and crying with a loud voice, he said, " What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God ? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not." It was not the madman who spoke, it was the evil spirit with which he was possessed revealing itself. The attitude of the evil spirit towards Jesus is always the same ; a superior force seems to impel the evil spirit to him. It recognised the Son of God in this extraordinary man ; it felt itself already conquered and enchained : it did not blaspheme, it asked for mercy.

These words throw a little light upon the mystery of the lost spirits. Their satanic joy is in the evil which they can do. The nothingness of their nature from which they have expelled God is their torment. To escape from themselves to enslave man and to trouble the earth would be a solace and a diversion in the terrible void to which they are condemned to be thrown back again upon themselves, upon that Ego which, without God, can only be dark, hideous, feeble, empty, this is what is meant by their imprisonment in the abyss.

Jesus did not speak to this wretched man, he replied to the evil spirit. He wishes first to deliver the soul, and when the soul is freed he will save the body.

" Unclean spirit," said he to him, " come out of this man. What is thy name ? "

" Legion," said the spirit, and renewing his entreaties he besought Jesus not to send him away out of the country.

Jesus did not answer.

Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. " Send us into the swine," cried the spirits by the mouth of the demoniac, " that we may enter into them." Jesus gave them leave. As he had, that same night, mastered the powers of nature, by calming the wind and the waves, he seemed in this exorcism to have more than ever the power to subdue spirits ; he spoke to them with a voice they could not resist, they went whithersoever he willed.

At a sign from Jesus, the unclean spirits went out of the man and entered into the swine, and the herd of about two thousand ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were drowned.

The Gerasenes at this touching sight had only one feeling, that of fear ; only one thought, the loss of their swine. Such

coarse and selfish natures could not understand him who had just landed on their territory. We do not know whether they were Jews or Gentiles, for Decapolis had a very mixed population. They could find nothing to say to the mysterious guest who had healed the demoniac ; they were afraid of him. The man of God often disconcerts those whom he visits. They would rather not be disturbed in their earthly career, in the unreal calm of the reign of the passions.

Instead of offering hospitality to Jesus, they dismissed him, timidly praying him to depart from their coasts. Jesus, who had respect for all men, even in their blindness and misery, would never thrust himself upon anyone. He returned to the shore and departed.

And when he was come into the ship, the man whom he had healed prayed him that he might follow him. He felt himself powerfully drawn to his deliverer ; it seemed to him that his life should be dedicated to him : such inspiration is possible to gratitude. The Master did not accede to his wishes, but, touched by his faith, he made an apostle even of this man, who had been violently possessed of a devil.

" Go home," said he, " to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had compassion on thee."

In Galilee, where Jesus was always so careful not to arouse popular excitement, he forbade those whom he healed to publish abroad their cure ; but in this country, where he was only making a short stay, and which he was about to leave so hastily, he wished that his name should remain after him, and that the outcasts of the Gerasenes should not be entire strangers to the work of deliverance which God was accomplishing for his people. All who have been saved by the mercy of God hear, sounding deep within their conscience, these words of Jesus. Nothing has more power to touch others than the witness of him who has himself received the benefits of God. Gratitude opens the heart, and the heart possesses the secret of moving and convincing others. This poor Gerasene departed and published throughout Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him, and the name of the Prophet became the object of universal admiration.

Jesus left the country of the Gerasenes on the morning of his arrival there, and returned to Capernaum. The ap-

proach of the ship, which had left the evening before, was seen from afar, and the crowd assembled to receive him. They were all waiting for him, says one Evangelist.

The account of the tempest, stilled that very night, and of the healing of the demoniac, would naturally spread among the people. But the marvels which seemed to spring up in his every footstep were no longer much regarded. Jesus only passed through the town, and left immediately for Nazareth, followed by his disciples. He wished to see again his own country, where he had tried some weeks before to preach the Gospel, at the beginning of his ministry in Galilee, and which he had left under excommunication, and threats of death. The Nazarenes had blasphemed in him the Son of Man : he forgot the insult, and with characteristic gentleness, he made a new and generous attempt to enlighten them. The prejudices by which he had been repelled would perhaps vanish before his now well recognized fame.

He showed himself in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. The old fierceness of feeling and violence of hatred seemed to have abated. Many, even on hearing him, were amazed and filled with admiration ; they did not deny his wisdom nor his miracles, but the humbleness of his origin was the stumbling-block of their faith. This they regarded as an objection to his divine mission. How, said they, is not he the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and of Joseph, of Judas and of Simon ? and are not his sisters among us ? What world-wide distances may separate the impressions and judgments of mankind ! The very lowliness of birth, which is now held only to set off and augment the merit of a great man, was among the Galilaeans of Nazareth the greatest bar to it. Perhaps they would have accepted Jesus merely as a teacher on a level with the others, but they could not recognize him as the messenger of God, as the Messiah. They were blinded with envy which they concealed under the Pharisee's sophism against Jesus : Will the Messiah come of so low degree, will a carpenter deliver the people and restore the throne of David ? Even the very family of Jesus did not avoid this offence ; the superiority of an extraordinary man is almost always misunderstood by those who have lived in familiar intercourse with him.

Jesus was astonished and grieved at the obstinate incredulity

of his countrymen. His goodness, which faith alone could bring into operation, remained for them for ever sealed; he only healed there a few rare suppliants on whom he laid his hands. He left Nazareth which he would never see again, and in taking leave of his compatriots, whose coldness contrasted with the enthusiastic welcome which he had received elsewhere from the people, he said sorrowfully to them these words, which pourtray his whole destiny: "A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin and in his own house."

A Nazarene, he was despised by the Nazarenes; a Jew, he was rejected by the Jews; but the Samaritans and the Gentiles welcomed and adored him.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TWELVE. DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The disciples of Jesus were the constant object of his solicitude during the whole time in which he preached the Gospel in Galilee, where he was so well received by the people, but denounced by the Pharisees. They formed his Church and his Kingdom. Their number had increased, and from them he made a selection ; he chose twelve, whom he called apostles. He had shown them, as he promised in words full of mystery, the angels of God ascending and descending upon his head ; he had taken them with him on the apostolic journeys ; and now, feeling them to be worthy of a higher confidence, he wished them to go forth and preach the Gospel, and to begin under his eyes the apprenticeship, as it were, to their apostolate.

The mission of the Twelve to the very midst of the Jewish towns would, Jesus felt, extend his own work. His days were numbered, and it was necessary that, notwithstanding the briefness of his own career, the whole people should hear the good news of his name and his Kingdom. The harvest is ripe, and the number of the labourers is increased.

Jesus summoned the Twelve to his presence ; the sacred writings do not clearly define the place of meeting. It was probably that same upper chamber in Peter's house at Capernaum where the Master and his disciples were wont to meet in the evening after the fatigues of his days entirely spent in the fulfilment of God's work.

He began, as a wise diplomatist, by limiting their field of action : " Go not into the ways of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

By thus restricting the sphere of activity, the Master lightened the work and adapted it to the capacity of the workers. It was besides the plan of God. Israel, which had the promise of salvation, ought to have its first-fruits ; the

time would come later for the Gentiles and the Samaritans. Then he added : " As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This contains, in a word, the whole teaching of the apostles. No part of their teaching was more sublime or more necessary : this implies everything ; all else, without this, is useless, and it is the special teaching of Jesus. He had already announced this in his address in the synagogues, in his parables to the people, and above all in familiar intercourse ; and though they were far from gauging its depths, they knew enough to say that the Kingdom of God was the Kingdom of the Messiah, that the Messiah was there, that they knew him and were his disciples, and that the necessary condition for becoming one of his Kingdom was to repent and to believe.

These new warriors needed a new armour.

" I give you," said Jesus, " power and authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

These words are evidently divine. It is in the power of man to impart ideas, commands, plans and ambitions, and to kindle in the souls of his disciples the sacred fire of enthusiasm, but he cannot transmit either his genius or his virtue. Not one of the greatest men in philosophy, politics, or religion, whom we read of in history, has ever laid claim to such a power. But Jesus transmits to his disciples the Spirit of God, which is in him and of him, and he sends them forth armed with these words :

" Go, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils."

The apostles in their ministry will have no other strength but the power of God, and this power will only be given them for the good of man. By it they will soothe the pain of those who suffer, restore the weary, give life to the dead, and freedom to those who are under the yoke of the evil spirit. Miracles of mercy will be the sign of their mission and the proof of their power. They will follow the example of their Master ; his Spirit will work in them and by them. Their faith will incorporate them with him, and will remain the condition of their superhuman activity. The power to heal physical ills and to command death may be suspended, but the power to influence souls and the authority over evil spirits will never fail. After all, it is a matter of small importance that the

body suffers and dies if the soul lives, healthy, free, and comforted.

Jesus continued his Messianic functions by his apostolic work, a work of deliverance, justice, and infinite mercy, which draws men's minds away from those evil doctrines which oppress and debase them, which quickens the dead conscience, gives the comfort of God to those who despair, and heals the troubles and infirmities which impede the world's progress.

At the same time that Jesus gave his apostles the strength of the Spirit, he pointed out what virtues he demanded from them : the kindness which is ready to sacrifice itself, the unselfishness which forgets itself, the poverty which forsakes all, the confidence which places absolute trust in God, the perseverance and courage which nothing can disturb. " Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor any money in your purses ; nor scrip for your journey ; neither two coats ; neither shoes, but only sandals ; with no staff but that of the traveller, for the workman is worthy of his meat."

Jesus instructed these members of the Church militant even to the smallest details of their method of warfare. In this first attempt to preach the Word, he did not wish them to go alone, but two and two, so that the one should sustain the other.

He did not send them either to the public assemblies of the synagogues or to the multitude. He feared for them, still timid and inexperienced as they were, the perils of a clamorous and stirring apostolate ; he knew the vehemence of popular passion, so easily roused and so difficult to calm ; he was aware of the subtlety and craft of the doctors ; he wished to save his followers from contests too hard for them ; and while waiting to give them, with the fulness of his Spirit, the whole world to evangelise, he recommended to them a more humble and quiet work, a sort of individual and domestic mission, of which the family would be the centre and standpoint.

" And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is most worthy ; and there abide till ye go thence : and when ye come into a house, say, Peace be to this house ; and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it : but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And

whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust off your feet." They are for you wicked houses and towns, you have nothing in common with them ; treat them as if they were Gentiles.

" Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."

He who is sent by Jesus is a messenger of peace ; like his Master, he knows neither violence nor oppression ; he is of the race of the children of God, of the peacemakers, of those who are gentle and meek.

His " schelam " is not an empty conventional greeting, it has a sacramental virtue, being the living and effective expression of the Spirit of God which it conveys. This Spirit overflows from all whom it inspires, and by them it is ever ready to influence those around ; it enriches not only those who receive it, but those who give it, and if rejected it returns as a blessing to him who has offered it. But the fate of those souls who rebel against the divine call is a dreadful one. The ruin of the accursed cities is not so terrible as the state of the man forsaken by the love of God, which he has driven from his heart ; sinking helpless into the abyss, which opens before all from whom God has withdrawn his presence.

Then Jesus began to depict in forcible terms the difficulties and dangers of proselytism in the midst of the world, and to exhort his disciples to those heroic virtues without which their efforts would be in vain. His conception is not confined to the present moment, it extends to all time ; it throws light upon the future, and embraces all apostolic work. By pointing out to his disciples the difficulties of their mission, he acted with the wisdom of a teacher who increases an hundredfold the courage of those whom he moulds to his views, by giving them a spirit superior to danger.

" Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." The sheep are defenceless ; the wolves, ravenous and armed for attack.

" Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ; and ye shall

be brought before governors and kings, for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

" But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

" And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child ; and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

" But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another in haste ; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."

Such is the fate of the apostles, foretold by the Master : the hostility of men, violent opposition, persecution, judgments, tortures, hatred, death. It is the first hint of the sad destiny of the Messiah. Before unfolding it to his disciples, Jesus told them what they must suffer themselves ; a stern revelation, which would help them to understand, when the time came, the mystery of the Cross.

After this gloomy picture, which must have frightened the little group of apostles, or at least dismayed it, Jesus went on to allude to the difficulties, opposition, and violence of which he himself was the object, and which was increasing from day to day. Our lot is the same, he added, " Do you not call me Master and Lord ? " You are my disciples, and you will be treated as I am. " The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master and the servant as his lord."

Then reminding them of the horrible insult which he had received from the Pharisees only the day before, he said to them : " If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household ? "

And what were these persecuted ones to do when these struggles came ?

Jesus asks of them prudence and simplicity : two gentle virtues which supplement one another ; for prudence without simplicity becomes craft, and simplicity without prudence

becomes childishness : craft deceives, and childish simplicity leads us to destruction.

They are not to resist evil by violence, they must conquer it by gentleness, or avoid it, and flee from it. The apostle is disarmed of all weapons of attack, he is not the wolf that rends, but the sheep that is slaughtered ; he is always the victim, never the tormentor.

But no difficulty, no danger, no violence will subdue him, he will persevere in his work even to the end, and will never know weakness or fear.

" Go," said Jesus, " there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed ; and hid, that shall not be known." The work of God, obscure and unknown, shall see the light of full day. " What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light ; and what ye hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops.

" Go, fear nothing, and endure to the end."

He, who is sent by Jesus into a hostile world, without money, without provision, without a staff, without a sword, without earthly strength ; humble, poor, meek, and gentle, is stronger than any human power : the body may be killed, but the soul will escape, and the soul is everything for the apostle, for in it dwells the Spirit of God by which he lives. He need fear no one, except him who has the power to cast the soul and the body into Gehenna. God, invincible, protects those who fear him ; he watches over every creature, the smallest as the greatest, but those who love him are his children, and he feels for them the care of a father.

" Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. As for you, the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The discourse of Jesus to the Twelve ended with a gentle word of encouragement. As he felt himself in absolute and filial communion with the Father, so he felt himself by his spirit in communion with his disciples. The last tie became ever closer, and Jesus loved to see himself living in them.

" He that receiveth you receiveth me," he said to them ; " and he that receiveth me receiveth the Father that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive

a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

To receive Jesus is to understand him ; to enter into the same Spirit of truth, of righteousness and of peace ; to be incorporated in him. To receive his disciple, the prophet or the righteous man, is to help in the work which they are fulfilling, to render oneself worthy of the same reward. The smallest act will not be forgotten ; the widow's mite will be remembered, and the glass of water counted.

The Twelve, strengthened by the teaching of the Master, went at his bidding two by two, to preach the Gospel in the towns and villages of Galilee.

Jesus, accompanied by other disciples, continued his work. His apostolic zeal never waned ; he never tired, he gave himself no repose. His days were spent in work, his nights in prayer.

It was about this time that the death of John the Baptist occurred, a short time after his message to Jesus and a few days before the Passover of the year 29.

The writers of the Gospels alone relate the details ; they learnt them from the disciples of John, who were accurately informed about it and who came from Machaerus to tell Jesus what had happened.

Herod's prisoner was under no misapprehension concerning his fate. Herodias had never forgiven him ; her hatred was implacable. The imprisonment of him, who had publicly condemned her, did not calm her resentment nor satisfy her vengeance for a moment ; she must have his life. She plotted with the courtiers, Pharisees, and Herodians, who had also been scathed by the plain-speaking of the anchorite, and watched her opportunity to be rid of her enemy.

In spite, however, of her influence over the tetrarch, she could not succeed in extorting from him this fresh crime. Herod was afraid of the Prophet ; he did not dare to face the anger of the people, which would certainly burst forth at the news of his death. The righteousness and holiness of John held him in check ; he had a regard for him, even took his

advice and listened to him willingly. But nothing thwarts the vindictive spirit of a wounded woman, she has pertinacity and craft which will conquer everything.

The opportunity which she looked and longed for came at last. It was Herod's Feast, probably not his birthday, but the anniversary of his coronation. The tetrarch with his court was at Machaerus, where he gave a sumptuous banquet to the tribunes and the great men of Galilee. During the feast, the daughter of Herodias, prompted by her mother, entered the banquet-hall, and, according to Jewish custom, to do full honour to the occasion, she began to dance. The girl forgot that she was dancing before the man who had dishonoured her father's hearth.

The tetrarch was flattered and touched. "Ask whatsoever thou wilt," he said to her, "and I will give it thee." And he swore a solemn oath that he would give her what she asked even to the half of his kingdom.

She left the room and went to her mother: "What shall I ask?"

"The head of John the Baptist," Herodias replied without hesitation.

The girl returned immediately to the banquet-hall, and approaching the king: "I wish," she said, "that you give me here immediately, on a charger, the head of John the Baptist."

At this unexpected and horrible request the whole character of the prince betrayed itself, a mixture of weak kindness, timidity, and false religion. He was grieved at the thought of shedding blood, but how could he draw back? He had sworn. The thought of his guests, who had heard him take the oath and who were perhaps enemies of the Baptist, intimidated him. He dared not refuse to commit the crime. He sent one of his guards and ordered him to bring the head of John on a charger. The man went and beheaded him in the depth of his prison, and brought his head on a charger, and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.

Herodias was avenged.

This was the tragical end of the Forerunner of Jesus. Such men cannot finish their career in peace, in a good old age, as the patriarchs of old. A violent death is more suitable

for the prophets, the heroes of truth and justice, or right and virtue. They have fought for their victory ; they have blasted vice ; they have proclaimed in their weakness, in the face of the powerful and the wicked, the *non licet* of an inflexible conscience. It is right that they should set the seal to their life, their teaching, their courage, their love and their mission with their blood.

God claims them first according to their desire. The world hates them, the world kills them ; it hopes to stifle the voice of righteousness, it only gives it immortality ; for the blood shed for God has supreme eloquence.

John preceded Jesus to death, and died preparing his way. His blood is mingled with that of the prophets, his forefathers, and with that of the Lamb, as he called Jesus, who was soon himself to be sacrificed. The way of the Kingdom from the beginning of the world even to the end of time is a way trailed with blood.

The Twelve returned from their first journey. They found their Master at Capernaum, and told him all they had done and taught.

But the multitude was now gathered to the place, men were constantly going in and out, and the house was crowded.

Jesus and his disciples, says one of the Evangelists, had not even time to eat.

He felt the need of close communion with his disciples, and wished to procure for them some days of silence and tranquillity. The news of the death of John was a sad foreboding of his own. The time was at hand to initiate them into the mystery of his sufferings.

He arose :

" Come apart into a desert place," he said to them, " and rest awhile."

He entered into a ship with his disciples and commanded them to cross the lake, and to row to the eastern shore towards Bethsaida.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE MESSIANIC CRISIS IN GALILEE

The north-east shore of the Lake of Gennesareth, between the mouth of the Jordan and the Wady Djebarieh, is a fertile, well-watered and verdant plain, known at the present-day by the name of El Batihah.

It was towards this plain and the lonely hills in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida that Jesus wished to retreat with his disciples. The lake can be crossed from Capernaum to the shore of Lower Gaulonitis within an hour. It is probable that the ship which bore Jesus would make for land not far from the present site of Dukah.

His sudden departure was soon known in the town. The crowd, having seen the ships sail towards the mouth of the Jordan, followed the road, which skirts the lake, so as to rejoin the Prophet. Jesus, who directed his steps to the mountain as soon as he had landed, did not wait to see the people arrive. Men flocked to him from all the neighbouring towns ; he had come to seek solitude, but, by his Father's will, a whole multitude was come to him. Their eagerness touched him, and he welcomed them all with kindness.

This solitary region seemed favourable to Jesus for the continuation of his apostolic work. He began to speak of the Kingdom of God, from the height of a hill to which he had withdrawn, followed by the crowd. In listening to him they forgot how the hours passed. The day was drawing in, the sun had disappeared behind the mountains of Galilee, and Jesus was still speaking. Twilight in the East is short, and night falls suddenly.

The apostles, feeling anxiety for the people, came to their Master and said : " This is a desert place, and it is already late : send them away that they may go into the villages and hamlets round about and find shelter and food for themselves."

Jesus said to them : " I have compassion on the multitude

because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat. If I send them away fasting they will faint in the way ; for divers of them came from far." " Give ye them to eat," he added quickly. This reply filled them with amazement. " What," said they, " shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat ? " The power of their Master was evidently far from the thoughts of his disciples. Not one of them dreamed of telling him that he could provide for them all. He seemed, however, to wish to rouse their confidence in him.

" Philip," he cried, " whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ? "

But Philip replied like the others : " Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." Then, addressing himself to all, Jesus said : " How many loaves have ye ? go and see "

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, enquired and said to him : " We have only five loaves and two fishes ; but what are they among so many ? There are more than five thousand men, not counting the women and children."

The repeated questions of Jesus only confirmed the apostles in their feeling of helplessness. But Jesus knew what he would do, and the more their helplessness was established, so much the more impressive would the work which he meditated appear in their eyes.

" Bring me," said he, " the five loaves and the two fishes, and make the multitude sit down on the grass, by fifties in a company."

The apostles obeyed, and the multitude spread themselves in two ranks by fifties, on the green grass of the hillside.

The Feast of the Passover was at hand.

Jesus, not being able this year to celebrate it at Jerusalem, because of the Sanhedrin, which had condemned him to death, wished to observe it, in his own way, in the desert.

He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looked up to heaven, and, when he had given thanks, he blessed and brake the loaves, and gave pieces to his disciples for them to place before the people ; then he divided the two fishes, and he gave to them as much as they would. The bread and the fishes were multiplied in his hands. They all did eat and were filled.

" Gather up the fragments that remain," he said to his disciples, " that nothing may be lost."

And with the fragments of bread and of fish they filled twelve baskets.

The crowd were struck with admiration and wonder at the sight of this miracle.

" This is, of a truth," they cried, " that Prophet that should come into the world."

The power which multiplies and transforms things, is the same as that which creates and preserves them. God, calling beings into existence and life at a word, and Jesus feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, are one and the same. It is the same power, the same wisdom, the same goodness.

This was the most popular miracle that Jesus ever did. It does not refer, as the others, to a single individual, but to a whole multitude ; and it has a prophetic significance, for it is a new and splendid revelation of one of the highest functions of the Messiah.

The thousands of men without provisions represent famished mankind ; no food can nourish and satisfy them ; One Being alone, God ; he it is whom we must see in the symbol of the loaves and fishes. In the desert of this world, Jesus draws mankind to him ; he brings men together, groups them in organised companies, gives them order and peace, and standing in the midst, he appeases their hunger ; the heavenly food multiplies in his hands and he chooses apostles to distribute it with inexhaustible generosity and power.

The preaching of Jesus had for its aim to show to all that the Kingdom of the Messiah had come, to make known the nature of this Kingdom, and to prove that he himself was its founder and its head. It was with this view that he preached from town to town, from village to village, healed the sick, promulgated his new precepts, drew to him all who were willing to come, fought the prejudices of the people and the doctors, passed his nights in prayer, attached his disciples to him and surrounded himself with apostles. After two months of incessant activity, in spite of the perfidious opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees, which never ceased, in spite of some partial failures, such as his two attempts at Nazareth, the whole people had been put in motion. The multitude

was in the hand of Jesus, he was its master ; charmed by his words and his teaching, excited by his miracles, it followed him whithersoever he went.

In the beginning of his ministry, he could escape from the crowd by entering into a ship, and saying to Peter, " Launch out into the deep," or, if it pursued him, by stealing away into the desert. Now the desert itself no longer protected him ; they went out to join him there. Jesus was not merely a Prophet in the eyes of the people, a messenger of God, as Nicodemus called him, and as the people themselves had called him more than once : he was the Messiah. The solitude of Bethsaida, after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, resounded with one long cry : " This is of a truth the expected Prophet, he who was to come, he who was prophesied by Moses, this is the Son of David."

With the exception of the disciples and the apostles, the crowd, in spite of its enthusiam, remained blind. It did not rise to the height of the teaching of Jesus relative to the true Messianic reign, nor did it free itself from its own prejudices relative to the true Messiah.

These ardent and warlike Galilaeans were always possessed by the dream of Judas the Gaulonite. What they hoped for was an armed leader, a conqueror, a liberator. Political passion inflamed and excited them. Their enthusiasm for Jesus was a paroxysm ; they encouraged one another, and formed a plot to carry Jesus away by force, perhaps to take him to Jerusalem and to proclaim him king in the face of the people.

It was a critical moment. Popular movements are terrible ; even the strongest are carried away by them, and the most skilful are disconcerted ; but the wisdom of the Master was never found wanting in any danger.

If Jesus had set off at once with his disciples in order to escape the crowd, the agitation, instead of abating, would probably have spread and blazed out in Galilee ; if he remained with his disciples in the midst of the crowd he exposed them to its contagious influence. Popular excitement is like a conflagration, it is impossible to resist its devouring flames. And the disciples, who were Galilaeans themselves, shared the fervent eagerness of the crowd. Everything that gave glory to their Master was likely to flatter them. They were far from perceiving the design of God in the work of the

Messiah, and if they believed in his triumph they could not imagine it unaccompanied by earthly power. If Jesus were proclaimed King by the people of Galilee, that would be the signal of the glorious advent of his Kingdom.

Jesus saw the danger, and, with a decision which knew neither delay nor uncertainty, he first saved his disciples. After the miraculous meal they had again approached the shore ; the Master told the disciples to enter into the ship and to go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida in Galilee, while he sent the people away. The disciples obeyed their Master's order with reluctance, and he had to use all his authority to constrain them.

The ship put out to sea, and Jesus dismissed the crowd. He could always control and charm it, but he never yielded to it. Of all those who were welcomed by it as deliverers during these troubled times, so ripe for rebellion, he was the only one who never submitted to its sway.

He followed the will of his Father, and looked up to his Father to escape from men who hindered his work. At nightfall, while the multitude was dispersing, he went up into the mountain alone to pray.

And the ship was in the midst of the lake when Jesus was on the mountain. The west wind blew tempestuously, the ship was tossed by the waves, and the disciples toiled in rowing. Those who are acquainted with the little sea of Tiberias know the fury of the winds, which suddenly agitate its waters ; the most intrepid rowers can hardly make head against them.

Jesus did not forget his disciples. He saw them in the spirit, and his spirit was with them without their knowing it. Towards the fourth watch he came to them, walking on the waves of the sea.

This sudden apparition terrified them ; they thought it was a spirit, and cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them : " Be of good cheer, it is I ; be not afraid."

And Peter said : " Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

" Come," said Jesus.

And at once Peter came down out of the ship and walked on the water to go to his Master. But the violence of the

wind made him fear ; and as he was beginning to sink he cried, " Lord, save me." Jesus, stretching forth his hand, caught him.

" O thou of little faith ! " he said reproachfully ; " wherefore didst thou doubt ? "

Then the disciples wished to take him into the ship, and, as he got in, the wind ceased of a sudden, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

The appearance of Jesus on the boisterous sea, and the sudden calm brought by his presence, filled the disciples with amazement, and as soon as they had landed they fell at Jesus' feet, saying, " Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

We will consider what was happening on the eastern shore of Bethsaida, which Jesus had just left, at the time when the disciples were worshipping the Son of God on the western shore, at the entrance of the plain of Gennesareth.

The crowd, dismissed by him in the evening, returned the next morning. They hoped to find him again, for they had noticed that only one ship was on the shore, and that Jesus had not entered into it, and his disciples were gone without him. The plot, however, to proclaim him King had not vanished in the night ; the ringleaders sought for Jesus, and, not finding him, they started for Capernaum, in boats which had come from Tiberias, hoping by this means to overtake the Prophet sooner.

The meeting, in fact, actually took place on the other side of the lake, just as Jesus was returning with his disciples from Bethsaida to Capernaum, and it obliged him to hasten the crisis which was pending. When a man of God, at war with the passions and prejudices of the crowd, sees the very independence and sanctity of his ministry threatened, the time for reticence is gone by ; he must tear away the veil and affirm the truth in its fulness ; the false and hypocritical heart will wither away, but the upright and faithful soul will live, and truth will triumph.

This explains the teaching of Jesus and the discourses which are now set forth, following the narrative of the fourth Evangelist. Their irresistible power is due to the grandeur of the assertions, the boldness of the precepts, the vigour of the symbols, and the intensity of the light they impart. Considered in reference to action, they represent, at this critical

juncture, the greatest effort which Jesus made to disabuse the Galilaeans of their vain dreams of a political Messiah, and to initiate them into the truth of his spiritual and divine character.

Those, who were seeking Jesus, said to him, as soon as they had found him, " Rabbi, when camest thou hither ? "

Jesus did not even answer their curiosity ; he went straight to the secret thoughts of his interrogators, he laid bare with one stroke all that was false, selfish and, it might be, treacherous in the eager attention that was shown him.

" Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

There are two kinds of meat, he cried, the one which perisheth, the other which endureth unto everlasting life. " Labour not for that which perisheth, but for that which endureth for ever, for that which the Son of man shall give unto you : for him hath God the Father sealed."

He besought them so urgently to seek the food of the Spirit, that the Jews, forgetting for a moment their preconceived hopes with regard to this world, cried out : " What shall we do then to fulfil the work of God, and to have the life which does not perish ? "

" This is the work of God," Jesus answered, " that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

To believe : the whole religion of Jesus, the whole secret of eternal life lies in this simple word. To live by the earth, man must apply to it his energy and activity, for it is only fruitful on these conditions : but to live by God, man has only to open himself to him and to receive him ; and this opening of the soul is faith. The supreme act of man in his relations with God is faith ; faith implies forgetfulness of self, complete submission and full surrender to the word, will, and Spirit of God. And since Jesus said that he himself was sealed with the divine seal, we must therefore believe in him as in God.

The Jews said to him : " What sign shewest thou that we may see and believe thee ? Moses had a sign. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert ; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

The multiplication of the loaves was not enough ; such a miracle did not raise Jesus to the height of Moses, and did not

justify his claims in their eyes. For the feeding of a few thousand men was not to be compared with the power of him, who for forty years miraculously fed a whole people in the desert. The rabbis had taught that the first Redeemer, Moses, had made the manna fall and that the second Redeemer would renew the wonder. We find an indication of these dreams in the importunity of the Galilaean crowd.

Jesus paid no attention to this demand. He had never in his whole career, in spite of his many miracles, given way in anything to this thirst for the marvellous which consumed the people. All his mighty works had kindness alone for their motive, and faith for their condition. Whoever believes in him feels his goodness, and then it expands without limit ; but whoever doubts and argues with him harshly, leaves him indifferent ; he passes by, without imparting his Spirit, leaving the sceptic to his wretchedness and his obstinacy. Here, with a superhuman grandeur, he affirms that he himself is the sign of God.

" Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven." However celestial the manna was in its origin, it was in its essence material a perishable symbol of the eternal bread. " But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven : for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth true life unto the world."

There were present in the assembly some souls who were touched and enlightened. " Lord," they cried, " evermore give us this bread."

Then Jesus began to explain, without reserve, what he was :

" I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." And alluding to the obstinate persistence with which they demanded signs, that they might come and believe in him, he intimated that he himself was the true sign.

But he added, " Ye have seen me, but ye have not come unto me, neither have ye believed."

This persistent incredulity afflicted and depressed Jesus. He felt, on this occasion, the whole weight of it. He had in the joy of his heart, and at a sign from his Father, given a feast to all these Galilaean people ; he had celebrated with them in the midst of the desert a miraculous Passover ; yet

the people understood nothing : instead of asking him for the bread of life, they asked for material bread ; instead of rising to higher things by the help of the symbol, they shut themselves up in their narrow ideas and prejudices.

A failure such as this was for Jesus a bitter foretaste of the fate which awaited him at Jerusalem itself, when he should go to manifest himself there for the last time in the presence of the representatives of the nation.

But the thought of his Father consoled him for all the reverses which he suffered at the hands of men. The obstinacy of the unbelievers can never prevent the work of the Father ; it will be fulfilled by the elect ; the reprobate will ruin only themselves, and make the righteousness of God shine forth more brightly.

So it was with a calmness full of confidence, that Jesus said to them :

" All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Yes, he went on with emphasis, " Such is the Father's will : every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, will have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

To come to Jesus, to believe in his word, is a gift of God. The man who shuts himself up in his own reason, in his own errors, vices, instincts, and selfishness cannot receive it. He who, at the call of the Father, that is to say, of good truth and life, becomes aware of his own misery and nothingness, will come to him and believe ; Jesus will not repulse him, he will not be denied nor deceived, every hope will be realized, for Jesus has the will and the power to satisfy all men's aspirations. He will find in him the eternal life which is the fulness of all his aspirations, the strength to preserve and develop it in this world, where everything is hostile to it, and where everything dies ; and such is the power of the life, concentrated by the Father in the Son of Man, that it will conquer physical death itself ; and at the last day the Son of Man will raise up all that the Father has given him.

Jesus did not stop to refute his adversaries. It was no

difficulty which hindered their belief, it was their inward disposition, which Jesus thus exposed:

"Murmur not"; that is, do not discuss the matter.

"No man can come to me except the Father draw him;" he will not see the sign; he will not understand; he will not believe. But, I say again, that that which the Father hath sent me I shall raise up again at the last day; I shall lead it to absolute perfection.

The Master only teaches here the doctrine of the Prophets. It is written, indeed, that all the members of the body of Christ's followers will be taught of God.

"Yes," said Jesus, laying stress upon this fundamental fact of the divine life in man, "every man that hath heard the Father, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he alone hath seen the Father."

To feel the attraction of the source of all being, all truth, all virtue, and all life is not the same as to see him. It is, on the contrary, a proof that we are far from him, but that since he leads us on we may attain to him.

Jesus alone never felt this thirst, for he is at the very source; and he alone can lead thither those souls which it consumes. He it is who came from God, and he descended from God that he might ascend again to him, taking with him all those who come to him. Returning then to the idea which had shocked the Jews and provoked their murmurs, he asserted himself again with even greater solemnity.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life, for I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever."

In calling himself the living bread, Jesus, by using this very forcible expression, declared with extreme clearness that he was not merely the bread which gives life, but he was himself the life of God, realised in human nature.

The false conception of the Messiah was thus dissipated at its very crisis.

As Jesus rejected, at the time of his temptation in the wilderness, the offers of Satan to give him the kingdom of

the world if he would submit himself to him, so at the time of his greatest influence over the people of Galilee, he rejected all terrestrial royalty and all compromise with popular passions.

The idea of the Messiah, for more than a century and a half, from the last days of Herod to the reign of Hadrian, had never ceased to tempt the ambitious. Judas the Gaulonite, Theudas the Egyptian, Bar-Kokbad, all these false heroes submitted to or worked upon the passions of the crowd, and provoked by its means sanguinary revolutions; they all found men learned in the law to encourage their mad dreams, and to sanction their plans and their mission of violence by the authority of the Law and the Prophets. The Pharisees were willing to be the sheepskin which covered these devouring wolves. Jesus alone remained free from such miserable ambitions, he alone realised the type of the spiritual Messiah.

The discourses which he delivered to the people during many days, and which have been summed up in such powerful terms by the fourth Evangelist, roused a veritable tempest. He took the fan in his hand, and separated by the passionate breath of truth the worthless straw and the good grain. The greater part was rejected, a chosen portion preserved. All those who could not renounce the wisdom to which they laid claim, their national ambitions, their ceremonious religion, their worldly hopes, gradually withdrew from him, puzzled, frustrated, shocked, and offended. The excitement produced by the Master's words, the storm which they let loose, was of such violence that some of the disciples themselves who had lived with Jesus were overthrown by it.

"This is an hard saying," they cried; 'who can hear it?" Jesus was watching his disciples, and he heard their murmur, and said to them, "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before: will ye then believe?"

This was an allusion to his future triumph, of which the ascension into heaven would be the striking proof, for it would prove that though man had momentary power over the humanity of Jesus, he had none over his Spirit, the incoercible and sovereign force.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth," he said; "the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they

are Spirit, and they are life." They realise and perform what they assert.

All the quickening power of Jesus depended on the Spirit with which his terrestrial humanity overflowed ; and if his flesh and blood can nourish the man who incorporates them with himself by faith, it is because of the divine Spirit in them.

But to participate in this Spirit, faith is necessary. " But," Jesus added, " there are some of you that believe not."

No doubt the Master clearly discerned the inward thoughts of those who came to him, and if he allowed evil-disposed natures to attach themselves to him, it was evidently to give them a better opportunity for amendment. By thus mentioning them, without giving their names, he invited them to repentance and faith. Then, reverting as usual to the thought of his Father, whose will fills his and leads all things, he repeated these words, which he loved : " Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father."

From this time many of his disciples, influenced by the movement which alienated the mass of the people from Jesus, went back and walked no more with him. This desertion must have grieved him, it was a kind of treason. However, one thought consoled him ; he saw in this rupture the purification necessary for his work ; and he would gladly have had it extended to the Twelve, for he knew by divine insight that there was an evil element among them also. He turned towards them and said, " Will ye also go away ? "

Peter, with characteristic ardour and enthusiasm, replied for all : " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God."

By thus speaking, the expansive soul of Peter merely put into words what he and the other apostles had already experienced by their intercourse with Jesus.

The Master, though touched by this cry, did not accept it without reserve. He knew that one of the Twelve was a traitor, and he told them so plainly in words which showed, at the same time, his love for those whom he had chosen, and the ingratitude of one of them : " Have not I chosen you ? and one of you is a devil ! "

Judas did not recognize himself in this severe allusion of Jesus. The hypocrite accepted as his own Peter's generous profession of faith, and he remained among the Twelve.

It is the will of the Father that in this world the tares shall always be mixed with the good grain.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE JOURNEY OF JESUS TO THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON AND THROUGH DECAPOLIS

HUMANLY speaking, the cause was lost. Neither the eloquence nor the wisdom, nor the miracles, nor the goodness of Jesus, nor the continual manifestations of the Spirit which abounded in him, could overcome the obstinate self-will of this hardened nation. They admired and applauded his teaching, they were insatiably eager for miracles ; but they remained impenitent and unbelieving. When the time was come to decide between the Gospel and their old prejudices, between the new law of the Messiah, and their national traditions, they resisted and turned away, and remained the slaves of their own prejudices and traditions. Instead of following Jesus they wished to be followed by him.

Three towns of Galilee, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, had been the object of the Prophet's most zealous care. They at least should have set an example to the others, and have roused them by the impressiveness of their conversion. But they did not change ; they continued to live in the old routine of religious observance and of godless practice.

Such hardness of heart drew from Jesus a cry of sorrow and indignation ; they seemed to him worse than the heathen towns, worse even than the towns, like Sodom, which were doomed to destruction.

" Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

" But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.

" And thou, Capernaum," the home of him whom the prophets spoke of, and whom the nations looked for, " thou which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell : for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had

been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

The judgments of God are not always deferred until eternity. The three towns, which bore the weight of these denunciations, have been utterly destroyed for many centuries. The glory of Jesus has risen upon their ruins, and his Spirit of life, which has created new nations and a new world, has left them to desolation and oblivion.

The Master confided to the Twelve his sorrow and indignation. But no despondent or bitter words ever escaped him, even in those moments of anguish when, feeling all the bitterness of ingratitude and faithlessness, he drank in deep draughts of the cup of suffering.

Even at this time, responding to the Spirit with which he was ever in communion, and which merged his human will in perfect union with that of the Father, he was filled with a great joy :

" O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I thank thee because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Throughout all man's defection or opposition, Jesus maintained, unshaken, the consciousness of his omnipotence ; to his disciples he declared himself equal to the Father, the one Master, the one revealer. " All things are delivered unto me of my Father."

The infinite source of all being, strength, truth, beauty, love, and life, has given all into my hands. " All that is in him is in me ; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Seldom had the consciousness of his Godhead inspired Jesus with clearer or more forcible words ; never had his ardent zeal, his love for man, wrung from him a more moving cry. His insight into their trouble, their anxiety, their agitation, their anguish, moved his compassion ; he thought of all those who are unhappy when he uttered these words which appeal to all mankind :

" Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn

of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The yoke of Jesus is the Spirit of God himself ; it does not burden those who accept it, it bears them up. And the burden is, that they who take the yoke upon them must renounce themselves, their instincts, passions, interests, their own life itself. But in the sacrifice of self-surrender, man renounces but his own worthlessness ; full soon he knows the peace, the strength, the joy of God ; he leaves the storms of time to enter into God's eternal calm.

All unprepared as they were for the gifts of the Spirit, Jesus gave freely to the people of material benefits. Even at this time, when the crowd were so hostile to his influence, he continued to heal the sick and infirm, to have pity on the stubborn-hearted, to weep for them, and to meet their faithlessness and hardness of heart by an increase of compassion.

His good deeds, on the plains of Gennesareth, in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, were countless. The hamlets, villages, and towns, which he passed through, were thronged with sick people, who were carried, lying on their beds, into his presence. They filled the public places and besought him that they might touch if it were but the hem of his garment, and as many as touched him with faith were made whole.

As he went on his way he was surrounded by all those who were in distress ; thus did he interpret his royal mission. This manifestation of goodness was the crowning-point of his apostolic work in Galilee.

From the time of the great crisis, which ended a few days after the Passover of the year 29, until the month of September, when he set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem, Jesus only made short visits to Galilee and Capernaum. The sacred writings no longer represent him drawing the crowd to him and explaining the mysteries of his Kingdom by parables, as in the first months. He went away in silence to the borders of the Galilaean territory, to the neighbourhood of the lands of Tyre and Sidon ; he visited Decapolis, touched at Magdala, and set out for the tetrarchy of Herod Philip, passing by Bethsaida-Julias. It was not until after these various journeys that he passed through Galilee, and re-entered Capernaum, for a hasty visit, on the eve of quitting it for ever.

The position of Jesus made this retreat necessary. He had reason to distrust Herod and his courtiers; the Pharisees, more exasperated than ever, were ever ready to entrap and threaten, and it was advisable that he should not expose himself prematurely to their hatred. The people, always possessed by dreams of martial glory, might renew their plot to carry Jesus away by force, and make him King in spite of himself. It was wise to escape from the blind adoration of such a multitude. Besides, the final scenes in the destiny of the Messiah were not to be in Galilee, but in Judaea and at Jerusalem. Jesus gathered his disciples about him to put the crown upon his teaching, to lead them gradually to a knowledge of his work, and to prepare himself for the final struggle.

Immediately upon leaving Capernaum to go to the neighbouring countries of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus met the Scribes and Pharisees, who were returning from Jerusalem, where they had kept the Passover. These noticed that some of his disciples at their meals broke the bread without having first purified their hands by the usual ablutions. Here was at once a cause of contention. The rigour with which these bigoted formalists insisted on the most minute observances which, according to their traditions, constituted the code of perfect righteousness and piety, is well known. Ablution was the great purifying rite; to give it the sanction of age, it was attributed to the era of Solomon, but in reality it dated from Hillel and Schammai. It had rapidly gained credit and had acquired great popularity in the time of Jesus. Those who despised it fell under the ban of the excommunication of the Sanhedrin.

The custom was applied to persons and even to things, such as chalices, cups, vases, beds, and to everything used in domestic life. The strict observers of these ceremonies marked the distinction between washing, sprinkling, and dipping, between the first water and the second; they made it obligatory to take four thousand steps to procure the necessary water, and one of the holiest of the rabbis taught that it was better to die of thirst than to transgress the tradition of the Elders on this point.

These details, which vividly depict the absurdities of the observances of the Pharisees, and show to what childishness

even minds otherwise enlightened may descend, help also to make us realise the divine courage of Jesus : he never yielded to such customs of man's devising, which in no way promote religion, but rather hinder and pervert it. The disciples naturally followed the example of the Master, and neglected the prescribed ablution before meat. The Pharisees were scandalised at their conduct.

Why, said they to Jesus, in an offended tone, do not your disciples observe the traditions of the Elders ? Why do they eat bread with unwashed hands ?

" Ye hypocrites," replied Jesus, " well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

" For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. For Moses commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother. He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, Whatsoever thou mightest he profited by me, it is dedicated by me to God, he shall be free. And you do not require that he do aught for his father and his mother. In this and in many other ways ye have made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have yourself delivered."

This severe reproof of Jesus met with no reply. He immediately called the crowd, to teach them and to expose the hypocrisy of their unworthy masters.

" Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand : there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him ; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile a man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

The disciples then drew near to Jesus, and said : " Knowest thou, Master, that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying ? "

Jesus no longer attempted to spare his adversaries : his words were impassioned, and unswerving in their directness.

" Every plant," he replied, " which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up : let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Jesus, leaving the crowd, went again into the house with his disciples. The parable of the true purity seems to have troubled their spirit, overthrowing, as it did, the whole teaching of the Pharisees, and setting at nought the righteousness of the Law, with its elaborate and useless ritual. Peter spoke for them, and said to the Master :

" Declare unto us this parable."

" And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding ? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, purging all meats ? But that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye or envious thought, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

The prophets had often, and in forcible terms, preached these sound and simple precepts ; but for many centuries the Jews ignored them more and more, and at the time of Jesus they were universally abandoned by the rabbis and the schools.

After this encounter, which showed once again the blindness and obstinacy of his adversaries, and their readiness to be offended without cause, Jesus arose and departed with his disciples to the borders of Phoenicia. We do not know by what roads he travelled, nor at what towns or villages he broke the journey. One circumstance, mentioned by St. Mark, shows that in the last months of the Galilaean apostolate, the Master intended to avoid the tumult of the crowd, and to allay its quickly-roused excitement.

On entering a certain house, where he was to be a guest, he commanded that his arrival should not be made known ; but he could not be hid, for the Gentiles round about soon heard that he was there.

A woman of Canaan, a Syro-phoenician, having heard of him, and being drawn to him through sorrow and trouble, came to his dwelling and besought him, and cried unto him :

" Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

Jesus did not answer her.

And his disciples besought him and said :

" Send her away, for she crieth after us."

Jesus replied : " I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The woman entered, and throwing herself at his feet cried, " Lord, help me ! "

Jesus withheld his compassion. It seemed as if, by a show of hardness, he wished to put the faith of this unhappy woman to the test, and to call forth an expression of her trust in him.

He said to her, " Let the children be filled ; it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs."

The woman received this harsh allusion to her heathen state without a murmur, and said :

" Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

Jesus was overcome by so much humility and gentleness :

" O woman," he said, " great is thy faith. For this saying, go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

The woman returned to her house, where her daughter lay upon the bed. The devil had gone out of her at the very hour that Jesus had spoken.

This simple story makes manifest the universality of the work of Messiah. By God's will, and by the action of Jesus, Israel, the chosen people, was the first to receive the good news, and to enjoy the light and the benefits of the Kingdom. But the Gentiles, represented by the woman of Canaan, are to follow in their turn, and the name of Jesus will be borne into their hearing ; they too are to learn that he comes to heal and to save. Then no more will they be like the dogs, gathering up the crumbs which fall from the table where the children of the Father are filled ; for they too will become his children by faith ; by faith also there will be equality among Jews and Gentiles throughout the world, and even those of a despised race will, if they but believe, become members incorporate of the chosen people of God.

On departing from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, he came again to the borders of the Lake of Gennesareth, passing through Decapolis. Here it will be impossible to trace the route, unless we can fix the position of this region. Deca-

polis, as its Greek name implies, was certainly a confederation of ten principal towns ; but we do not know the names, nor the exact situation of several of them. The Evangelists, who often mention Decapolis, assume that it is well known, and give no precise details.

We do not know which road Jesus followed, nor which town in Decapolis he visited. In spite of the care which he took to avoid the crowd, the people hastened to him in increasing numbers, attracted by his wonder-working power. Curiosity, the desire to be healed of physical ills, the thirst for the miraculous ; these things will always stir the people. There were led to him the halt, the blind, and the dumb, and those who were sick of divers diseases. They fell at his feet and he healed them, so that the Gentiles marvelled and glorified the God of Israel.

St. Mark gives a full account of one of these wonders, the healing of the deaf and dumb man. They besought Jesus to put his hands upon him ; he took him aside, far away from the multitude, put his fingers into his ears, and with his spittle he touched his tongue ; then looking up to heaven he sighed and said, " Ephphatha," that is " Be opened." And straightway his ears were opened and his tongue was unloosed, and he spoke plainly. Jesus charged them that they should tell no man, but it was impossible to check the enthusiasm of a multitude, which is always carried away by feeling.

The more Jesus demanded silence, the more they published it abroad. The people cried aloud, in their admiration, " He hath done all things well ; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." It is thus that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Left to themselves, with their innate sense of right and the spontaneity of their impressions, they rejoice at the sight of truth, justice and goodness, and for this reason Jesus loved them. The eager enthusiasm of the crowd consoled him for the hostile and arrogant attitude adopted by the Pharisees.

Some days after, as he continued his journey, he found himself again surrounded by the multitude, over which he exercised an irresistible attraction. It gathered together in his footsteps and followed him, as sheep follow the shepherd, without care for the morrow, delighted and enthralled. It

had continued with him three days, and there was no food. Jesus ascended a hill and sat down, and then he called his disciples to him, and said :

" I have compassion on the multitude ; they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat ; if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way, for divers of them came from afar."

The disciples were astonished, and reminded him of the impossibility of feeding a whole people in the desert. Jesus said, " How many loaves have you ? " Seven, and a few little fishes. He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground ; then he took the seven loaves and the fishes and gave thanks to God, and brake them and gave to his disciples, who distributed them to the people. They all did eat and were satisfied ; and of the broken meat that was left, they took up seven baskets full. And they that did eat were about four thousand, beside women and children.

Jesus hastened to send away the multitude and to escape quickly himself. The lake was near ; he entered into a ship with his disciples, and landed in the country of Dalmanutha, on the coasts of Magdala.

His arrival in the country of Magdala, not far from Bethsaida and Capernaum, was soon made known.

The absence of Jesus, from the time when he asserted with such clearness and decision, in the synagogue at Capernaum, the spiritual nature of his Messiah, had in no way appeased the anger and hatred of his enemies.

Many of them combined and came to Jesus, and, hiding their evil designs under the mask of apparent sincerity, desired him to show them a sign from heaven, no doubt promising to believe in him if he complied with their request.

When he saw these same Pharisees adding deceit to hatred, and renewing their attacks with still greater obstinacy than before, he could not refrain from uttering a cry of grief ; he sighed deeply in spirit, says one Evangelist.

Jesus, always master of himself, replied to his adversaries : " When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather to-morrow, for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky ; but can ye not discern the signs of the times ? "

The times, that great sky of history, of which the visible sky is but an image, were filled with signs which should have been clear to every eye. For had not the weeks of Daniel been accomplished, and the sceptre gone forth from Judah? The country lay in desolation, waiting for a saviour. The words of the prophets were fulfilled. Elias had come, in the person of John, as the precursor of the Kingdom; and the miracles of Jesus his Spirit, and his teaching satisfied all that the prophets had declared concerning the Messiah. And yet, in the face of these signs, the masters of Israel dared to ask for others! No light can open the eyes which refuse to see.

"Why," cried Jesus, in words of passionate earnestness, "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? It is a wicked and adulterous generation." Instead of obeying God, it only listens to the temptations of evil; instead of being as a faithful spouse, it is in adultery with Satan.

"It seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Jesus was referring to his death and resurrection, which was to be the great proof of his mission; that crowning proof which should be furnished by those very unbelievers who, in their blindness, would not understand the rest, to whom it should be a crowning offence and stumbling-block.

After these mysterious words, Jesus dismissed his questioners. He could have no dealings with these sophists; he therefore left them, and departed in a ship with his disciples to Bethsaida, which was on the other side of the lake.

In the hurry of their departure the disciples forgot to take bread with them. Jesus was still sorrowful and indignant at the attitude of the Pharisees with their invincible determination to reject God's call, and the darkness in which they wilfully wrapped themselves. Suddenly he said to those whom he had chosen, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod."

The disciples did not understand the meaning hidden under this image of the leaven; they were only thinking of the provisions they had forgotten, reproaching one another for their negligence, and asking themselves how they should live if the Master, according to his custom, led them to some desert place.

Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, which they did not dare to speak openly, said: "Why reason ye among yourselves

because ye have no bread? O ye of little faith, perceive ye not, neither do ye understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

"When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?" "Twelve," replied the disciples.

"And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?" And they said, "Seven."

Then he added, "Why do ye trouble yourselves? Cannot I feed you? But it was not concerning bread that I spoke when I said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

At last they understood to what he referred.

Jesus at all times tried to elevate his disciples' thoughts by concealing truths under the veil of chosen symbols, which the various incidents of life suggested, and which he left to them to interpret. Here he wished to warn them that the dominating influence of the Pharisees, which tended to choke the good grain of his teaching, was likely to prove a source of danger.

When they had crossed the lake they landed, and came to Bethsaida.

And they brought a blind man unto Jesus, and besought him to touch him. The faith of these people was so great, that they were persuaded that he could heal him merely by the laying on of hands.

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town, to avoid the tumult of the crowd. Then he anointed his eyes with spittle, and laid his hands upon him and asked him if he saw anything.

"I see," said the blind man, "men as trees walking."

Then Jesus put again his hands upon his eyes, and the blind man began to see. Gradually he saw everything clearly, and was healed.

"Go to thy house," said Jesus, as he sent him away "and if thou go into the town tell no man what hath befallen thee."

This graphic account, given with full details, was evidently

obtained from an eye-witness. St. Mark, who relates it, was no doubt repeating the description of St. Peter, one of the three apostles whom Jesus loved to take with him, even when he avoided the crowd and his other disciples.

The full scope of the miraculous acts in the life of our Saviour would not be rightly grasped if, after the manner of the crowd, we admired only the external and material element in them. It is not enough to recognise in them merely the divine proofs of his mission, but we must regard them as "signs," as St. John so expressively calls them.

Every act of Jesus is a lesson of profound meaning.

The healing of the blind man of Bethsaida is the living symbol of the progressive action of Jesus, bringing into the light all those who do not see the truth of God.

In the same way, by satisfying the people with loaves, which were miraculously multiplied, he revealed himself as the sustainer of mankind, and by giving sight to blind men he showed himself to be the light of the soul.

Man has lost the knowledge of the divine world, he wanders in darkness, incapable of understanding God; Jesus comes to him, takes him by the hand, draws him aside, and, by gradually opening his eyes to the light of eternal truth, he fulfils towards him one of the most necessary Messianic functions.

The disciples, who were sprung from the Jewish masses, had to be led quietly out of the troubled atmosphere of doubt and error. Once brought into personal contact with Jesus, they could feel the all-powerful influence of his Spirit; and being thus, little by little, initiated into truth and virtue, they found his real nature, his divine power, his teaching, his precepts, and designs, dawn almost insensibly upon them. In less than three years, these fishers of the lake, these tax-gatherers, these children of the soil, cast off their primitive nature, and assumed the nature of their Master. He became their wisdom and strength, their soul and their spirit, and by him alone they both thought and acted. "I live no longer," one of them said in after-years, "but it is he who liveth in me." No such transformation is to be met with in the whole of secular history.

Thus were the disciples, the constant witnesses of his

miracles, subdued at length by his grandeur and his divinity. But there remained in his weakness, his sorrows, his humiliation, and his death, a deep and tragic mystery, of which they had no conception. And yet this mystery was on the eve of its fulfilment, and the time was come that it should be revealed to them by the Master.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FUTURE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH. THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus only made a short halt at Bethsaida. After his final rupture with the people of Galilee, his life was one long journey, far away from Capernaum and from the lake, through towns and villages, where he endeavoured to pass unknown. He had travelled through the borders of the country of Tyre and Sidon and throughout Decapolis, and he now sought with his disciples a more complete solitude in the neighbourhood of Caesarea.

The territory lying on the east of the Jordan between Julias and Caesarea is a wild mountainous waste, where even ruins are rare. In the time of Herod it must have been sparsely populated. It was traversed by the great Roman road which led from Damascus to Jerusalem.

Jesus must have crossed this road near the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob, as he journeyed towards the villages in the neighbourhood of the town which Philip the tetrarch had so much beautified. We have no details of his apostolic and public work in this country, which he was visiting for the first time ; as in other places, those who were sick and suffering cried out to him, and he comforted and healed them. Nevertheless his real object was not to preach the Gospel in the tetrarchy of Philip, but rather to prepare his disciples for the tragic fate which awaited him. The scenes of close spiritual communion between him and them threw all other events into the shade, in the memory of those who were present ; they occupy the whole period intervening between the ministry in Galilee and the supreme event which was reserved for Judaea and Jerusalem.

At this time two conflicting feelings were struggling for the mastery in the soul of Jesus ; bitter sorrow at the desertion of the people, whom he had tried in vain to rally to the faith, and thrilling joy at the sight of his disciples, faithful and

believing. They, however, do not seem to have felt either trouble or anguish at the defection of the people which so grieved their Master ; the more he was deserted by them, the more closely did they gather round him. Secure of the protection of an invisible force against all the dangers of popular impulse, and unshaken in their confidence, they surrendered themselves calmly to the glorious dreams of the future Kingdom, and to the illusions which the wisdom of Jesus was so quickly to dispel.

One day, Jesus and the disciples who were with him were walking from village to village round about Caesarea. Jesus wished to elicit from them a new and decisive confession of their faith. It was evening, and he had prayed alone, according to his custom. Prayer was not for him merely a complete surrender of his spirit, his will, and all his human faculties to God his Father ; it was also an all-powerful though invisible means of influencing the souls of those whom he wished to save, to elevate, and to strengthen. Being alone with his disciples, he asked them this question : " Whom do men say that I am ? "

Jesus knew the rumours which were current among the people on this subject ; he questioned his followers, not in order to inform himself, but to lead them on to proclaim in opposition to the errors of the people the truth concerning himself. The strength of the opposition between the disciples and the crowd on this point, will enable us to judge of the gulf which henceforward was to divide them.

The disciples replied :

" Some say that thou art John the Baptist ; some Elias ; and others Jeremias, or one of the old prophets risen again."

This testimony was a true expression of the state of public opinion. The people no longer saw in Jesus the Messiah whom they had dreamt of, he was only in their eyes one of the prophets who were come to prepare the way.

" And ye," said Jesus, " whom say ye that I am ? " Peter, who had already protested the fidelity of the Twelve to the Master at the time of the crisis at Capernaum, now confessed in the name of all their faith in his divinity.

" Thou art the Christ," he cried, " the Son of the living God."

These words of Peter were not inspired by a vague con-

fidence in the superhuman grandeur of Jesus, but by a luminous, distinct, and discerning faith; though few, they are all-containing, for they declare the Messianic character of Jesus and his divine sonship.

The very essence of faith is that it delivers us over entirely to him who is its object. He who believes is no longer his own master; he belongs unconditionally to him in whom he believes. He renounces everything: his ideas, his interests, his own personal initiative. He dies to himself to live spiritually in another; he gives his own life for the life of another. No one but God has the right to demand this absolute faith, for every man has faults, imperfections, and errors, and therefore to surrender oneself to a man is to become the slave of that man's less worthy attributes.

Jesus demanded absolute faith, and that is a sign that he claimed the rights of God. But after having preached the Gospel in Galilee for more than seven months, to win this faith, only a few of the poorest and the most ignorant were convinced. Those things which the learned men; the Scribes, the Masters, and the Rabbis; neither could nor would understand, they understood and proclaimed; what their nation rejected they accepted. With this handful of believers Jesus was able to found his Kingdom, to move and to conquer the world.

The confession of Peter touched him.

"Blessed art thou," he cried, "Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

"And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Faith in Jesus as God is shown here in all its gradneur. It was in reward of faith that Peter, the first of the believers, was chosen to be the human foundation, the firm rock of the Church; and on him all the elect of the future were to lean, that is, whosoever following his example, shall believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The faith of Peter and his successors will be an unfailing faith. Others may be shaken, but Peter and his successors, never.

The great design of the Kingdom of God now begins to show itself: the plan of Jesus is disclosed to the eyes of his disciples by this word "the Church," which he had not employed before.

He will call to himself and gather together in him the chosen ones, who are scattered throughout the earth and among all nations; and this gathering together in one faith constitutes the Church. Jesus created her to be indestructible and to be invincible. No power in this world, not even that of hell, which contains them all and represents the spirit of evil, can prevail against her. She will withstand everything; whether arrogant science, or false religion, or material culture, or the cunning or brutality of politics, or the corruption which destroys everything, or man's inconstancy, or time itself. The Spirit is its strength, and nothing terrestrial, nothing human nor infernal, will overcome the Spirit.

Jesus wished to provide a Government for this multitude of believers, an authority within his Church; and it was upon Peter that he conferred this power, by giving him, as he symbolically expressed it, the keys of the Kingdom. Peter will rule those who believe; he, the instrument of the Spirit of God, will give the Spirit to those who are worthy, and withhold it from those who are unworthy; those who receive it will be admitted into the Kingdom, but those who do not receive it will be rejected. Jesus will remain the invisible, and Peter the visible head, and in his mission he shall not fail, for Jesus has promised him.

Thus wonderfully is human reason set at nought. A Galilaean workman, proclaimed the Son of God by a fisherman of Bethsaida, announces that he will build a structure which will be proof against the powers of death, in a world where everything falls to ruin, where time alone suffices to obliterate all things, where nothing is enduring, no creation of genius, no religion, state, conquest, civilization, race, school, legislation, system; he promises immortality to this structure, which is his Church: and the immovable foundation on which he builds is a weak and mortal man, whom he invests with divine authority. Nothing more marvellous is related in history: it throws everything, Vedaism, Buddhism, Parseeism, Mahometanism, and Philosophism, into the shade; it is without a parallel in the works of man.

Jesus constitutes in himself the one centre, the absolute

power. In him alone we must believe, to him alone we must attach ourselves by faith. He does not appeal to any particular race or nation, all are included; all who live and think, all who sigh, and all who hope. There is no system, no written law, but there is the Spirit of God, which is his Spirit, and the authority and the obligation to spread it, in his name, throughout the world.

Jesus, feeling them to be now more firm in the faith, at length disclosed to them the secret of his destiny; a mournful secret to which he had hitherto only made obscure allusions.

"The Son of man must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Man goes to meet his fate blindly, but Jesus perceived his, even to the smallest details. It was revealed to him in the will of his Father, of which he had perfect knowledge, in the prophecies which foretold his sufferings, in the progressive development of events, and in the hatred of his enemies which nothing but his death would satisfy. In disclosing the future to his disciples, he must have betrayed the sorrow which filled his soul at times, even unto death.

The disciples seem to have rejected this solemn declaration of our Lord. They could not even imagine that their Master should suffer such a grievous death. Their faith in his divine power, their love for himself, their illusions concerning the Messiah, all combined to render such an idea impossible.

Peter, on this occasion, once again expressed the thoughts of all. He took Jesus aside, and, prompted only by feelings of love and devotion, reproached him for looking forward to so sad a destiny, saying:

"Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."

Jesus turned to him, and in a severe tone rebuked him, saying:

"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

After the severe rebuke addressed to Peter, Jesus wished to point out to his disciples and to all, what he demanded from those who would follow him faithfully. No teacher has ever made greater demands. He insists on a complete re-

nunciation, a generous acceptance of all sorrows, even to the sacrifice of life itself.

It is not enough to proclaim him the Son of God ; we must share the sorrowful destiny of the Son of Man. Jesus saw the cross on which he should die, at the time when he framed this comprehensive law of heroism, which has remained the supreme law for the true disciple of Jesus.

" If any man will come after me," he cried, making a sign to the people to draw near, " let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Jesus did not hesitate to set at defiance the natural instinct of self-preservation which shrinks from suffering and death ; it is his will that we should follow in his steps, even though we should be led to suffer or to die. The true life, even at the price of suffering death, cannot be too dearly bought.

" Whosoever will save his soul rather than follow me," he said again, " will lose the life which I will give him : and he who is not afraid to lose the life of to-day, for my sake and the Gospel's, will save his soul, and will live through me the life which is eternal."

It is the soul which must be saved, for that is the whole man. " For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? "

The conception of Jesus is boundless in its range. We feel that he lives at the same time on earth and in heaven, among men and with his Father ; throughout this life of sorrow he keeps the glorious aim in view, and as he wishes us to sacrifice all to gain eternal life, so he wishes us to tremble before the terrors of that day when he shall come in the majesty of his glory and the omnipotence of his righteousness. The gloomy prophecies of the Master weighed upon the souls of his disciples ; the thought of what he was to suffer at Jerusalem, and the severe duties imposed on those who aspired to follow him, filled them with misgiving and with a secret fear. If he whom they confessed to be the Son of God was doomed to die, what would become of his glorious Kingdom ? This thought disconcerted their hopes ; they turned their minds from it, not daring to think of it, or even to question their Master.

Weak man cherishes the hope that he will escape the troubles which await him, by closing his eyes to them. Jesus

had regard to this weakness of his disciples, and, to restore their courage, he was silent concerning his sufferings, and spoke to them of his future glory. One day, feeling them to be in great dejection, he even assured them, in a solemn tone, that some of them were shortly to behold it.

" Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the Son of man coming in his power and in his kingdom." These mysterious words referred to a marvellous event, which was soon to occur to justify them.

Six days after, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John and brought them up into a high mountain, apart, to pray.

The name of this mountain is not mentioned in the Gospels ; the only witness who has alluded to it in his writings is Peter, and he calls it " the Holy Mount." But the tradition which points to Tabor has never, during so many centuries, been broken or contradicted.

While he prayed he was transfigured before them.

His face was changed, it shone as the sun ; his garments became white as snow, whiter than any fuller can make them.

And, behold, two men appeared unto them, talking with him : they were Moses and Elias, enveloped in glory. They spoke of his death.

But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep. When they were awake they saw him in his glory, with the two men with him : and, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, " Master, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."

While he was speaking, a bright cloud came and overshadowed them ; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying : " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him."

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.

Jesus came and touched them :

" Arise," he said, " and be not afraid."

They lifted up their eyes and looked around, and saw no one ; Jesus was alone with them.

The impenetrable wall which divides the terrestrial world

from the divine world, was for a moment broken down, and the different conditions of mankind were made apparent.

Above the three disciples, who still bore the burden of life and who were heavy with sleep, which is the image of death, there appeared Elias and Moses, both of whom had entered into eternity. They spoke with Jesus, who is Lord over them, and who, in the unity of his person, reunites all the worlds in glory. His raiment, of the whiteness of snow, is the symbol of that which matter will become at the time of its divine transformation ; his shining body foreshadows what we ourselves shall one day be ; his soul, which embraces the infinite, reveals the destiny of all those spirits who are called to the true life of God. The bright cloud, which envelops everything, represents the ineffable Being, who will gather to him all the chosen ones, when they will possess for ever the joy and the glory of the Son of God.

This is Christ as we behold him in the majesty of his Kingdom, in that of his Father and the holy angels.

This marvel outweighs all the others. When Jesus commanded spirits with authority, remitted sins, converted the hearts of men with a word, healed the sick, controlled nature, the wind and the tempest, he manifestly exercised his influence on things outside himself ; at his Transfiguration he himself became the object of the miracle. The divinity within him, which was hidden under the veil of a mortal body like our own, for a moment shone through the veiling flesh, tore from it all obscurity, weakness, suffering, and mortality, to clothe it again with light and glory. When the spirit and soul of man is bathed in the glory of God, when the soul, pervaded by God, envelops the body which it quickens with its own beauty ; when matter pervaded by the Spirit throughout all its kingdom, suffers a glorious transformation which renders it a worthy habitation for the sons of God, glorified in the image of Jesus, then the Kingdom of Heaven shall be consummated.

God appeared in Jesus at his Transfiguration, as he will in us at the end of time.

By this revelation to three of his disciples, Jesus wished to show to all mankind, the glorious goal which he should reach through suffering and death. Sorrow and death are but the way ; the end for him, as for us, is the transfiguration of our whole being into the splendour of God.

It was not only his face and his body which were of a dazzling brightness, for even his raiment was white as snow ; all that touched Jesus was transformed into light.

Two mysterious figures were near him : Moses, the great lawgiver, Elias, the great prophet ; they spoke of his death, that " Exodus " which should take place at Jerusalem. By going there to die, Jesus fulfilled the Law represented by Moses, and realised the word of the prophets, represented by Elias. His end was to be more grand than theirs ; not to die, like Moses, at God's kiss ; not to be translated, like Elias, in a chariot of fire ; he was about to surrender himself through love in an ignominious death, to the anger of God.

The disciples present at this manifestation, which the prayer of Jesus had called forth from the very depths of heaven, were asleep. When they awoke they were filled with an inward joy ; they wished to dwell for ever with their Master on Mount Tabor. The close communion of God with the pure heart is always accompanied by such unspeakable transports which are yet akin to terror ; for in the presence of the Almighty, man sinks into insignificance.

God revealed his presence, under the image of the bright cloud which enveloped Jesus, Elias, Moses, and the three Apostles. This same cloud which was shown in the wilderness to the people of God, and at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, will be seen again in the triumph of the Ascension of Jesus. A voice came from the cloud, the voice of God himself, saying : " This is my beloved Son, whom I have chosen ; hear him." A new and solemn intervention of the Father was necessary to persuade and command the disciples to follow his son and to do his bidding, in the fulfilment of his sad destiny.

Peter, who had said to Jesus, " Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee," heard at this time the voice of God himself, saying : " Listen to my chosen one, whatsoever he saith unto thee, follow him whither he leads thee, whatever be the road." And to emphasize this unique sovereign authority of Jesus, the only ruler of men, at that very instant the great lawgiver and the great prophet disappeared, and Jesus remained alone.

He is the law, he is the light ; all things that were before him vanish at his presence ; he alone shows mankind the end for which it should strive, he alone opens the way by which it should travel. Though the way be rough, the end will surpass

our expectations. He has the right to require all things, for he can promise all ; if death is the way, we will walk with him to death, to enter into life.

The Transfiguration was no mere accident in the life of Jesus, it was a direct result of the laws of its development. One of the most invariable of these is, that his humility as a man always made his hidden Godhead to burst forth, and the more he abased himself by voluntarily accepting sacrifice, sorrow, and death, the more did his divinity shine brightly in him and exalt him.

When he asked John to baptize him, like a sinner, the heavens opened above his head ; at the moment when he resolved to fulfil all the Law, he heard himself called the well-beloved Son of the Father. At the height of his triumph in Galilee, he renounced all temporal glory and repudiated the intervention of the people, who were ready to proclaim him king ; on the same night he walked on the waters, calmed the tempest, and showed himself lord over nature.

Here he had just declared to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, to suffer and to die ; six days after he appears in the glory of his Kingdom, greater than Moses and Elias, universal and sole master, resplendent with light and immortality, transfigured in the radiance of his Father. Some months later, overwhelmed by the thought of his sufferings, he cried to his Father, " Save me . . . but for suffering am I come. Father, glorify thy name." A voice mighty as thunder, answered him : " I will glorify it."

When his hour is come, he will submit to insult and death ; he will descend into the tomb ; the living Spirit will raise him from death and the tomb to the glory of the Father.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE LAST CONVERSATIONS AT CAPERNAUM

A VISION, if only for a moment, of the truth, the beauty, the holiness, and the glory, which will be ours when the victory is won, is the great means of strengthening the failing courage and the feeble will, and of calming the troubles of the mind in presence of obstacles and dangers. At this sight hope lifts her head, faith grows bold, and the soul, exalted above itself, becomes capable of every effort. In this way, Jesus set in the hearts of his favoured three disciples a leaven which should spread its energy among all the rest, instilling into them a courage and faith against which oppression, despondency, and tribulation were to have no power.

Jesus, on the following day, descended Mount Tabor with them, and, as he walked, he said unto them :

" Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

The gifts of God exalt and expand the soul, but it is not good always to publish them. Their very grandeur often only attracts incredulity, and exposure becomes profanation. If treasured in the hearts of those who have witnessed them, they give strength and light ; if prematurely divulged, their virtue evaporates and is lost.

The three apostles, at the Master's command, kept this secret to themselves, seeking in vain to understand what he meant by the words " until he be risen from the dead."

They asked themselves to what resurrection he alluded, and whether he spoke in a figure : was his body, indeed, to rise from the dead, or did he refer to the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel after his death ? The latter hypothesis alone engaged their thoughts. " Why," they asked, " do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elias must come before the restitution of the Kingdom of Israel ? "

Jesus replied: "Truly, Elias cometh first, before the advent of the Son of man, to restore all things and to prepare his way; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought. But I say unto you, that Elias has already come, and they knew him not; and as it is written of him, they have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."

The apostles understood that he spoke of John the Baptist. Suffering is the destined burden of all the messengers of God; John the Baptist had already submitted to it, and now Jesus was about to take it upon his shoulders.

On rejoining the disciples at the foot of the mountain, he saw them surrounded by a numerous crowd, and the Scribes questioning with them; his unexpected arrival caused great amazement: about his face there was still a reflection of the celestial light. They ran to him and saluted him:

"What question ye among yourselves?" he asked.

"Master," answered one of the multitude, falling at his feet, "I have brought my son to you: have pity on him, he is a lunatic, and suffers much: he is possessed of a dumb spirit. Whenever the spirit takes possession of him, it throws him on the ground, he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. I spake to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not."

This lack of power in the disciples must have provoked the raillery and the reproach of the Pharisees among the crowd. Jesus was greatly struck with the general incredulity. All were wanting in faith: the father of the lunatic, the Scribes, the people, and even the disciples.

He gave a cry of indignation:

"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?"

But, at the sight of any sorrow to be healed or comforted, his compassion got the better of every other feeling.

"Bring him unto me," he said.

As soon as the child saw Jesus, the spirit, tormenting him, threw him violently to the ground, and he wallowed, foaming.

And he asked his father, "How long is it since this came unto him?"

" Since his infancy. Often the spirit throws him into the fire and into the water to kill him. If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

The father's words, " if thou canst," betrayed his little faith.

" If thou canst believe," said Jesus, " all things are possible to him that believeth."

And straightway the father cried out, with tears :

" Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief ! "

The people came running together about Jesus, and he rebuked the foul spirit :

" Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of this child, and enter no more into him."

The spirit uttered a great cry, and rent him sore and came out of him. The child fell down as though dead.

" He is dead," they said.

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose ; he was healed.

The vivid and detailed description which the second Gospel gives us of the sick child, suggests epilepsy. It would be wrong to conclude that this physical infirmity excluded demoniac possession, and that in this case, as in the rest, only ignorance and superstition saw in it the action of the evil spirit. Jesus paid no attention to the bodily malady. The violent disorders visible in the case of the poor epileptic, were, in his eyes, merely the manifestation of a Satanic power, to which he was in bondage. It was this mysterious agent that he addressed, and, by casting it out, he healed the child.

The whole secret of his influence over mankind, enthralled by the powers of evil, is made manifest in this act. By it, mankind, enfranchised, listens to the voice of God, learns to praise him, and recovers, with its liberty, the peace which nothing can again disturb.

Immediately after, Jesus left the people marvelling at the power of God, and the Scribes in their discomfiture, and took refuge in a house with his disciples.

Having proved their own powerlessness, this cure appeared so much the more miraculous to the disciples. They went to their Master, and said to him secretly : " Why could not we cast out this devil ? "

" Because of your unbelief," Jesus replied : " for verily I

say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," a small seed of great vitality, " ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove. Nothing shall be impossible unto you."

By the teaching of Jesus, it is faith, indeed, which makes us participate in the very life and power of God. It is no longer the man that works in the believer, it is God himself.

Then he added, " This kind of devil," sensual and obstinate, " goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

These two words express what faith should be : by fasting, faith tears from us all material and physical strength ; by prayer, it unites us to the Being, the light, the goodness, the power of God. The human being is completely subverted, he no longer has root in the terrestrial world, to which he dies ; he has his spring of life in the divine world, of which he becomes the irresistible instrument.

This conversation occurred in the neighbourhood of Mount Tabor. Jesus and his disciples proceeded in the direction of Capernaum, passing through Galilee. As he did not wish to excite the attention of the people, the journey was made in secret. On his way he taught the disciples.

The thought of his approaching death never left him, and he reminded them of it. As they walked along, he said to them suddenly : " Keep these things in your heart : the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day after his death he shall rise again."

But they did not understand this mystery, which remained a secret to them ; and not only did they not understand it, but they feared even to question the Master on the subject.

Man shrinks from the truth if it is antagonistic and humiliating to his reason. Nothing appeared so incongruous to the Jews as the idea of a suffering and sacrificed Messiah. The apostles were worthy of their race ; even after having confessed with true faith the divine sonship of their Master, they obstinately refused to believe in his humiliation and in his momentary defeat ; while Jesus is trying to lead their thoughts back to this idea, in order to familiarize them gradually with the sad and terrible aspect of his fate, they are only thinking of the glory of his reign and discussing with one another,

unknown to their Master, their own precedence in the Messianic Kingdom.

The little company of travellers reached Capernaum ; and their return was marked by the following incident.

It was just the time when those who received the tribute money were collecting the tax ; they came to Peter and asked him : " Doth not your Master pay the didrachma ? " " My Master doth," replied Peter.

But when he was come into the house to inform Jesus, Jesus forestalled him.

" What thinkest thou, Simon ? " he said to him, " of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ? " " Of strangers," said Peter.

Then Jesus answered, " The children are free ; notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money (a *stater*) ; that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

This incident, which the first Evangelist alone has recorded in his narrative, contains an allusion to the divine sonship of Jesus. Though he rejected all temporal royalty he implied that he was the son of the eternal King ; and, in virtue of this right, he declares himself and all those who participate in his Kingdom to be free. But the Son of God, who took upon him the form of a servant to save men, in dealing with men, knew also how to renounce his rights. Charity is higher than justice ; to claim one's rights is an act of justice, to renounce them an act of charity. Jesus followed the dictates of charity, and gives an example of renunciation to man, who is always so hard and so grasping when his rights or his interests are touched : he will pay the tribute, but only by making his divine power manifest, and by sending Peter to find the two didrachmas in the mouth of the fish.

At the same time, the disciples entered the house of Cephas, and, when they were all together again, Jesus asked them : " What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ? "

They were silent for a moment, not daring to reply. At length they acknowledged that they had discussed who should be the first in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The petty passions which agitated the hearts even of those who were so close to their Master are betrayed by this significant incident. Peter had been chosen their head, and James and John seemed to enjoy a certain preference. These marked distinctions did not fail to arouse a certain envy and jealousy among the others. God is master of his gifts ; but selfish, vain, self-seeking man, instead of using them for the good of all, is ready to use them for his own advantage, and, though close to the side of Jesus, he grows restless and self-conscious, extols his own merits, refuses to recognize those of others, and aspires to the first place. Hence arise bitter disputes, rivalries, insults, and the wounds of injured self-love. Jesus was not ignorant of these less worthy feelings which disturbed the peace and union of his disciples, and he devoted the last day, perhaps the last hours, at Capernaum to healing them.

He wished to speak with them privately, and no doubt he retired into the upper chamber. Having sat down he called the twelve to him and said :

" If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and the servant of all."

Then he took a little child and set him in the midst of them.

" Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall become as this child the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

To be the last, the servant of all, to be humble, to recognize the vanity of one's own reason, knowledge, strength, will, virtue, genius, activity, ambitions, interests, pleasures, and glory—in a word, to confess one's own nothingness ; that is the condition to enter and to be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. God only hears the humble and the needy, the hungry ones who cry to him with a true feeling of their wretchedness. This was the special teaching of Jesus, and he reminds the Twelve of it by showing them a child, as the symbol of weakness, sincerity, and lowliness.

The innocence and docility of the child moved his compassion, for his sympathy was always aroused by helplessness and purity. He took him in his arms and said :

" Whosoever shall receive one of such children, in my

name, receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me receiveth not me alone, but him that sent me."

Jesus, in his loving kindness, identifies himself with all that is poor, helpless, and unfortunate.

To assist the weak and to receive them for his sake, as he himself said, is to help and to receive him; it is to receive God himself.

This exhortation appears to have troubled the mind of one of the Twelve.

"Master," said John, "we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."

But Jesus replied, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you."

To do good in the name of Jesus is to have spiritual communion with him, and then, even if we are not outwardly associated with the community of his disciples, we are, though standing apart, useful helpers in his work.

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water only in my name, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward."

No act of kindness is forgotten in the Kingdom; but woe unto them that shall do evil to those who are tender and weak!

"Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me," he added in a warning tone, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea."

"Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Jesus teaches us to resolutely shun, and to sever from us, everything that leads to evil.

"If thy hand offend thee," he said in words of severity, "cut it off and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands to be cast into the eternal fire. If thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, rather than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather

than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"As every sacrifice is salted with salt to render it incorruptible, so they will be salted with fire and preserved by it."

These words of Jesus make us feel the anger of his goodness. Justice is not so terrible as the mild reproach of love.

Never had the righteous innocence, the birthright of the weak, been more vividly, more tenderly exalted.

Jesus was never weary of this subject; it brought out his compassion and tenderness, his love and pity, in their fulness.

"The Son of man," he continued, "is come to save that which was lost." He regarded the whole of mankind as a weak and erring being whom he had come to strengthen and reclaim.

"How think ye?" he said to his disciples; "if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray."

It was thus, then, that the mind of Jesus interpreted the never-failing mercy of God. The Father is the good shepherd, who does not wish one of his flock to perish; and he has sent his Son on the earth to gather them all to his fold.

The true sign of goodness is forgiveness, and Jesus showed its beauty to his apostles.

"If one of thy brothers have trespassed against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he will not hear you, tell the assembly of brothers, tell it unto the church; and if he will not hear the church let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

It is the duty of charity to seek out unweariedly the erring brother, even until it encounters declared and immovable obstinacy. The man who becomes inflexible in hatred and

insult no longer belongs to the Church, for he no longer has the Spirit of God in him.

" Again I say unto you," said Jesus, " that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

" For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

These simple words give briefly the very essence of the work of Jesus. He is the bond of union of those who are joined together in his name, and he is in the midst of them ; his living Spirit cries aloud in them, and invokes the Father, through whose mercy it obtains all things. Jesus was working towards this coming together of his followers upon this universal assembly, and the disciples, who surrounded him, and who received in full measure of his wisdom, power, and love, already realised the unity of his Church, which still exists at this present day with unlimited power to forgive sins.

The Spirit which inspires the Church is mercy and pity, and by obedience to this Spirit she will continue the work of her Master in mankind, which, constantly sinning, has constant need of pardon.

A question asked by Peter elicited this declaration from Jesus concerning the duty and the power of the Church.

" Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me," he asked, " and I forgive him ? till seven times ? "

The infinite pity of the Master offers a striking contrast to the niggardly pity of man :

" I say not unto thee, Until seven times : but, Until seventy times seven."

This contains the whole spirit of the Kingdom. Jesus declares it by an impressive parable :

" The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. At first one was brought unto him which owed six thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and payment to be made. The servant fell on his knees and besought his master, saying, Have patience with me, I beseech thee, and I will pay thee all. The lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt ; but as he went out from his Lord's house, he met one of his fellow-servants

which owed him an hundred pence. He laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. The debtor fell on his knees and said, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called the first servant, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him up until he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

The Kingdom of Jesus is the kingdom of love, and of pardon, which is an indispensable form of love. Whoever has been incorporated in it, is pardoned of God, and henceforth his duty is to pardon his fellows. The pity of God is infinite ; ours should be boundless like his. Woe to the man who shuts out all feeling of pity, for he who is inexorable will encounter the inexorable justice of God.

No virtue demands more heroism. Man seems by nature implacable from his birth ; if he cannot avenge himself, he keeps deep down in his heart the bitter feeling of resentment, and, by not forgiving, he nourishes the desire for vengeance. Jesus exacts this heroism, and, by requiring it of man, he reminds him that he must be like God.

We see with what trusting confidence the disciples questioned him ; with what gentleness he taught, corrected, and exalted them.

Never before had man heard such lessons, or been incited to such virtues. It was thus in the midst of a world given up to all forms of pride, divisions, hatreds, oppression, and violence, that Jesus impressed on the souls of his disciples the first features of a new Kingdom, based on humility and gentleness, pity and forgiveness, respect and reverence for all the weak and the oppressed. Such a design requires some other spirit than the corrupted spirit of man, and explains the mysterious words which conclude the discourse :

" Salt is good," it preserves, it prevents decay. Have

in you the Spirit, which is the salt of the soul: "Do not let it lose its savour." It will give you peace. "Have peace one with another." This was the last discourse of Jesus at Capernaum, spoken on the eve of his quitting Galilee, and setting out for Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE

The departure from Galilee marks the culminating point in the life of Jesus, and divides it into two distinct phases. Galilee and Judaea were his two scenes of action.

To leave Galilee and return to Judaea was, for Jesus, to encounter severe struggles ; he determined upon the step with a heroic firmness. "The time," says St. Luke, "when he should be received up from this world, was accomplished : he set his face steadfastly towards Jerusalem."

Six months separated him from death. It was henceforward his one thought ; he consecrated the rest of his life to preparation for it, and carried alone the secret of this overwhelming future. He had repeatedly prophesied it to his disciples, who could not believe it. If they caught a glimpse of some fierce conflict to be sustained, faith in the power of their Master reassured them, and their warlike Galilaean nature emboldened them ; the deflection of the crowd had not shaken their confidence, and they lived in the thought of the glory which was promised them by the privileged place they held at the Messiah's side.

The journey of Jesus to Jerusalem was marked by various incidents which bring into relief his calmness, his wisdom, and his unchangeable gentleness.

The Feast of Tabernacles approached, one of the great solemnities of the Jews. It fell on the 12th of October, in the year 29. Caravans were already being formed in the towns and villages of Galilee, to set out to Jerusalem ; relatives, friends, and neighbours joined each other and prepared for departure. The cousins of Jesus, those whom the Evangelist calls his brothers, namely, the sons of Mary, his mother's sister, and of the brother of Joseph the carpenter, came and urged him to set out on the journey. Since the festival of Purim, he had not revisited Jerusalem, where he had left some secret disciples. "Go then to Judaea," said his relatives

to him, "that your followers may be witnesses of your miracles. No man acts in secret, when he wishes himself to be known. Show yourself to the world."

"Go you to this festival," said he to his kinsmen; "as for me, I go not yet, for my time is not yet come."

The reply was not understood; Jesus remained reserved towards his family, who would have shackled his designs.

The caravans left; Jesus remained. His intention was to go a little later, unknown to the crowd. His disciples alone were told of his projects. He left Galilee with them and took the direct road to Judaea across Samaria. He had sent people before him to announce his coming. They entered a Samaritan village in order to prepare a lodging for him; but he was not received there, because he seemed to be going to Jerusalem. He had in the beginning of his public life found a hearty welcome in this same Samaria; but the happy days were becoming rare: he was entering into a period of sorrow and bitterness.

The refusal of hospitality irritated the disciples. Two of them, James and John, the favourites of the Master, felt the insult more keenly than the rest. "Master, if it be thy will, let us command fire to descend from heaven and consume them." These words of intemperate zeal proved to what a degree the apostles had faith in the almighty power of Jesus. The sight of his glory on Tabor had rooted him in their hearts, and exalted him; the example of Elijah, and his impetuous ardour, returned to their memory. Jesus turned towards them with the severe reproof:

"Ye know not of what spirit ye are; the Son of Man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

The little caravan took its way towards another village, but it is probable that, wishing to avoid the inhospitality of Samaria, it descended into the valley of the Jordan, to follow the ordinary route, which passes through Jericho and up to Jerusalem, across the desert of Judah. As they journeyed, a man who was a scribe came to Jesus, and said to him, "I will follow thee, Master, whithersoever thou goest." Jesus said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Jesus had nothing, not even a dwelling-place. At Capernaum, he received the hospitality of Peter; and now he was going,

having no longer any assured retreat, and he who wished to be his disciple must share his lot. We cannot tell whether the scribe comprehended the necessity of this absolute disinterestedness, or whether he withdrew, discouraged and disconcerted.

Again, Jesus said to another: "Follow me." "Master, let me go first and bury my father." "Let the dead bury their dead; do thou go and preach the Kingdom of God."

"Master," said another to him, "I will follow thee; but let me first set in order the goods that are in my house." "Whoso puts his hand to the plough, and looks back," Jesus replied, "is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

These three incidents, characteristic as they are, not only teach us the firmness and heroic disinterestedness that were required by the Master, they also give life and animation to the narrative of this whole journey, which he had chosen to surround with mystery.

Jesus was only accompanied by his disciples, and determined to send them forth, two by two, as he had already sent his apostles. He chose seventy-two of them, commanded them to go into the towns and villages of eastern Judaea and Peraea, while he pursued his way to Jerusalem; and he appointed for them, in the region on the other side of the Jordan, a place of meeting, which the documents do not name. Seeing that his stay in the city would raise an opposition, before which he would again be obliged to flee, he purposed to return to his disciples, to continue with them his work of evangelization, in the districts which had not heard from his lips the good news. Before leaving them, he spoke to them of the harvest to be gathered, using a phrase he loved. "It is great," said he, "and the labours are few. Pray the lord of the harvest to send labourers into the field, to gather the harvest." Then renewing the instructions he had already given to the Twelve on a former occasion, he dismissed them. "I send you as lambs among wolves." The task was the same; the tactics were to be the same; the powers conferred were the same; there were the same risks to run; the same poverty, the same zeal, the same spirit of gentleness and peace. No vengeance was to be taken against the unbelievers who shut their doors on the messengers. They were to shake the dust off their feet against the ungrateful house or town, and leave it to the judgment of God.

The towns of Galilee came into the thoughts of Jesus. He uttered a touching cry of Woe ! against them, against Bethsaida and Chorazin and Capernaum, which had misunderstood him. Then he turned to his disciples, and inspired them by his words, with his soul and Spirit. " Go ; and he who hears you, hears me ; he who despises you despises me ; and he who despises me, despises him who sent me."

Jesus continued his journey towards Jericho and Jerusalem. Khan-el-Achmar has been from time immemorial a halting-place for caravans. Jesus must have rested there. An ancient tradition has assigned to this very spot an episode of the journey recorded with details by St. Luke. The Gospel narrative seems to confirm this tradition ; for it certainly takes place upon the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and we know that the teaching of the Master always bears the imprint of time and place, of the smallest circumstances under which it was uttered.

Jesus was seated, surrounded by his disciples and other persons, among whom was a scribe. The scribe rose to put to proof the wisdom of Jesus. " What shall I do," he said to him, " to inherit eternal life ? " " There is the Law," replied Jesus, pointing to his phylacteries and the passages traced there. " The Law of Moses : what is written therein ? How readest thou ? " The scribe replied : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself." The answer was perfect. Jesus approved it : " Do thou likewise, and thou shalt live."

The Gospel alone tells us the true meaning of the word neighbour ; it alone reveals to us the God who takes possession of the heart, invades the soul, commands our powers, and enlightens our spirit ; it alone creates in us this sovereign love of God, without which the love of our neighbour is but a phrase.

Following the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, Jesus arrived at Bethany, that village which St. Luke omits to name, and in which a woman named Martha had her dwelling. She lived there with Lazarus, her brother ; and her sister Mary Magdalene, at this period, had retired there. The converted sinner, now become one of the most zealous followers of the

Master, had consecrated herself to his service, in the fatigues and journeys of his mission. When Jesus resolved to come to Jerusalem and Judaea, she must have been warned of it, and she took up her abode at Bethany with Martha, in order to be still upon the steps of the Saviour.

Jesus arrived at the house of Martha. Tradition has not forgotten the hospitality which he received there. According to his custom, he had taken his place for the repast upon the couch of honour. The sister of Martha also had come to sit near the Master, at his feet, listening to his words. Martha, on the contrary, hastened hither and thither, distracted and absorbed by various cares. She stopped before Jesus, and said to him : " Lord, seeth thou not that my sister leaves me to serve alone ? Bid her that she help me."

" Martha, Martha," replied Jesus, " thou art careful and troubled about many things ; one thing only is needful." Then referring to the part of honour reserved for the guest who was welcomed, he added : " Mary has chosen the better part : it shall not be taken from her."

Quitting his hosts at Bethany, Jesus took the road to Jerusalem, and climbed the Mount of Olives. The pilgrim who came from Jericho loved to halt upon this hilltop, before entering his cherished Zion. And seeing it appear suddenly before him, beyond the valley of Jehoshaphat, he was seized with a religious emotion, and a thrill of patriotism. Jesus stopped to pray ; a venerable tradition has placed in this spot the scene related in the pages of St. Luke, and which forms the last episode of this journey in which we follow the Master step by step from Capernaum.

His prayer had always for those who surrounded him a touch of solemnity. He isolated himself ; and his disciples waited in silence till he should rejoin them. On this day, when he had finished, one of them said to him : " Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

" When we pray," said Jesus, " say Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

What the Master had taught on the mountain he still taught

here. There were not two prayers, one for the crowd, the other for individuals ; one for the common people, the other for the chosen ; the same spirit is in all the members of the Kingdom, speaking to all, and in all, in the same language.

When Jesus, after his prayers and his conversation with his disciples, descended the hill and journeyed towards Jerusalem he could see the town in all the noisy brilliancy of the Feast of the Tabernacles. The solemnity lasted a week, from the fifteenth to the twenty-third day of the month of Tischri (October).

When he arrived they were in the middle of the festival. The Jews were looking for him in the crowd of pilgrims. His memory in Jerusalem had remained alive, not only in the Sanhedrin, which anxiously followed his doctrine, his conduct and his action, but among the people also, whose conscience he had so powerfully stirred, and whose hopes of a Messiah he had fanned into flame. Public opinion was rife with his name. Everywhere, among the groups, he was the subject of conversation. Some said : " He is a good man " ; others disputed it ; " No," cried they, " he is a seducer, and a false prophet." But among these masses accustomed to submit to the tyranny of the power so hostile to Jesus, they were afraid to express themselves openly and with frankness. The flatterers of authority exaggerated out of complacency their opinions against him ; and the timid, the cowards, were afraid to defend him.

Jesus went straightway to the Temple and began to teach under the porches.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, 29 A.D.

THE doings of Jesus in the metropolis, during the Feast of Tabernacles and the days which followed it, are known to us only from the narrative of the fourth Evangelist. The episodes are briefly told; the discourses summed up in a word or phrase; yet, in spite of their reticence, his pages bring vividly before us this memorable time of agitation, in which Jesus asserted so courageously the title and functions of the Messiah.

Each successive scene takes place in the Temple, under the Porch of Solomon, or in the gallery of the Court of Israel, near the boxes placed ready to receive the offerings. Here the Prophet's days were passed. He arrived at the first hour, taught the crowd, disputed with the Pharisees and Scribes, and at nightfall returned, with his disciples, to the Mount of Olives to pass the night.

The multitude, which pressed on him to listen to his teaching, did not resemble that which followed after him in Galilee, on the shores of the lake, on the mountains, and in the desert. By the side of the humble country folk, simple men and without learning, whom St. John designates by the expression ὄχλος, might be seen the inhabitants of the capital or, as he calls them, Judaeans. They were distinguished from the mass by a better knowledge of the Scriptures, a more refined devotion, and, above all, a more implicit obedience to authority, upon which they had their eyes fixed continually, ready to receive the watchword, learning from it their duty, both in word and act.

The chiefs mingled with the crowd to keep a watch upon it and to form their judgment of the Prophet. By passing into the Court of the Priests or the great hall of council, the Elders, the members of the Sanhedrin, the unbelieving Sadduccees, or the intolerant Pharisees, infatuated by their learning, could find themselves within reach of his words; and they charmed

and captivated some certainly, more than one no doubt, offensive as they were to so many others.

Jesus, to these men of learning, was an unlettered person ; it was known that the carpenter of Nazareth had frequented no school, and yet he showed a knowledge of the Law and the Prophets superior to that of all the masters. He drew from the Scriptures truths new and old ; he could embarrass his adversaries and reduce them to silence. None of the doctors had spoken like him of the Kingdom of God, nor shown the vanity of traditional observances ; none had conceived, like him, the part and personality of the Messiah ; none had either claimed the Messiahship with such unfaltering authority and determination, or made good his claim by such astounding signs. The people, then, were struck with wonder and admiration ; but the leaders, the guardians of official teaching, the learned men, were only irritated, and affected disdain towards a doctrine which they treated as a personal one, and in which they recognized no validity, since it did not rest on the authority of any master.

We have seen that, at this period, the tradition of the Fathers of the synagogue was all-powerful, nothing else was held decisive. For any solution to be accredited, whether in a question of doctrine, law, or ritual, it must be put under the patronage of one of the great couples. But Jesus, he who condemned the errors of later ages ; he who went beyond the prophets themselves, and feared not to give himself out as the Messiah destined to fulfil the Law, could invoke only one authority, that of God. " My doctrine," said he, " is not mine, but his that sent me."

" If any man," says Jesus, " will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak it of myself."

" Blessed are the pure," he said, " for they shall see God."

Those happy ones will prove that God is the good for which the soul is thirsting, and the strength without which it perishes ; and they will understand how the doctrine of Jesus, which alone reveals him, is the spirit and the life.

This inward method, at once simple and sublime, is within the reach of all ; it is the sure way which leads to the truth which Christ teaches. When he laid it open to his enemies, he made the one effort which could save them. The way remains such as he first traced it ; no free being can attain

belief, if, entrenched in his reason as in a fortress, he obstinately refuses to do the will of God and to verify in his conscience the words of Jesus.

The teaching of Jesus implied his own glorification. They were angry that he spoke of himself, offended by his pretensions to be the Messiah, which they cast in his teeth with bitter disdainfulness. If I spoke of myself, he answered, your accusations had been lawful. " He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh the glory of God who sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." He speaks only that which God inspires in him ; he does only that which God commands him.

" Ye accuse me of transgressing the Law. And yet, this very Law that Moses gave you, there is none of you that keepeth. Why go ye about to kill me ? " Jesus had not forgotten the healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda, during his last sojourn at Jerusalem, and the threats of death which he had heard on that occasion from the lips of the emissaries of the Sanhedrin. The people who pressed on him were doubtless ignorant of this fact and of these threats ; at the word death, they believed that Jesus accused them of attempting his life. " Thou art mad," they cried, " and the devil distracts thee. Who goeth about to slay thee ? "

Jesus resumed his justification : " I have done but one work, in healing the palsied man, and ye all marvel that I have broken the sabbath. Do ye not break the sabbath ? Moses gave circumcision, not because it is of Moses but of the Fathers, and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the Law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me that I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day ? "

Here the circumcision, the great rite of the Jews which had the religious result of incorporating the circumcised in the people of the covenant, is compared by Jesus with work which heals man wholly, body and soul. " If the law of the sabbath," he concluded, " yielded to the one, how much more should it yield to the other. And if ye circumcise, without fear of breaking the Law, how much more have I the right to perform my work and to heal." He appeals from legality to morality, from outward observance to inward virtue, from the letter to the spirit, from the Law to the

conscience. " Judge not," said he, " according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

There could be no ordinance against goodness. Holiness and goodness are for every day and for every hour ; and there is no sabbath for them ; for they are above all.

This public justification before the people assembled under the porches of the Temple, and in presence of the doctors who had so bitterly accused him, shows with what aptness Jesus could avail himself of the Scriptures, the authority of Moses, and the customs, to confound his adversaries ; and with what power and wisdom he appealed from them to conscience and justice, which only need be named to wake an echo in the heart of the people.

Hearing him speak with such freedom and with such power, certain of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were amazed. They had recognized Jesus, and they knew that the priestly authorities treated him as a blasphemer, and had ever since the festival of Purim sought to put him to death. " Is not this he," they cried, " whom they seek to kill ? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him." The teaching of Jesus does not seem to have taken possession of their minds. True to their habits of servility, they ask, " Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ ? " If the masters would but speak, it may be that they would listen to them willingly. We see, by this sign, that their conscience was neither touched nor persuaded.

The Pharisees did not fail to recall with scorn his Nazarene origin, terming his parents poor and his town contemptible, and blinding the people with the errors of their teaching. All the wisdom of Jesus, all his miracles and his power, were destined to be shattered against idle dreams.

He grew indignant, and, in order to combat the errors of the people upon which his enemies knew how to play so skilfully, began to explain the divine origin of his mission and his person. As he had asserted that his doctrine came directly from God, so he now asserted with still greater insistance that from thence proceeded his mission and his very being. He lifted up his voice ; he cried, says the Evangelist, as though the better to express the fulness of the Spirit which animated him.

" Ye both know me," he cried, " and ye know whence I

am ; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him : for I am from him," and he it is on whose mission I am come.

This last statement must have wounded to the quick those Pharisees who considered themselves the favourites of God, the guardians of his word, and the faithful observers of his commandments ; but nothing could stop the utterance of the truth from the lips of Jesus. He is determined to unmask the false religion which blocks the way to belief in himself ; and not death itself could hinder him.

At the same time that he reproached the Jews for their ignorance of God, he opened his whole soul and gave utterance to his consciousness of divinity. " Whom ye know not, I know ; for I am from him, and he hath sent me."

At length the multitude was moved. A great number rallied to the faith ; we hear them say : " When Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done ? " These words imply a movement favourable to Jesus. This disquieted the Pharisees who were mingled in the crowd ; and with zealous hatred they assembled to warn the chief priests who, as members of the sacerdotal families, formed the ruling party in the Sanhedrin.

They began with one accord by sending officers who should keep a closer watch on Jesus, and profit by the first favourable moment to seize and bring him before the Great Council. Shocked and offended as they were by his teaching, what they dreaded and feared was not so much his teaching as his influence upon the people.

Jesus saw in this hostile measure directed against him, the beginning of the persecution and the approach of death. The vision moved him, and forced from him the touching but solemn, calm but mournful words : " Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto him that sent me." And he invited them all to profit by the few days that remained to them. It is the last hour of the divine appeal ; in Jesus was the final appeal of God.

" Ye shall seek me," he said, " and shall not find me ; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." Under this veiled language he signified the exaltation of his manhood in the glory of the Father, and the happy end to which he would conduct those who should have faith in him. It is to the

Father that Israel must be gathered by its liberator, but on the condition that it shall follow him.

These moving and menacing exhortations, far from bending the obstinacy of the Jews, provoked by their enigmatical character the irony of the Sadducees. "Whither will he go," they said, "that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Gentiles?" And they passed on, repeating the words of Jesus, in which their blind hearts could discover no meaning.

On the last evening of the festival, while all were going back to their houses, he set out towards the Mount of Olives. He loved this tranquil spot, where he reposed, in prayer, from his daily labour. The city lay spread before him at his feet, and he must often have wept over it.

Early in the morning he returned to the Temple. Although the solemnities of the Feast of Tabernacles were over, the people ran in crowds to him under the porch; and he sat to teach them. He was in the gallery of the Treasury, which surrounded the Court of the Women, when the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery. She was placed in the midst of a circle which was formed before Jesus, and the Pharisees put to the Master this insidious question: "This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"

The trap was cleverly set. If Jesus replied, "Stone her," they could accuse him, before Pilate, of encroaching upon Roman authority, which, in all conquered provinces, reserved to itself the right of life and death; and they could raise the people against the inexorable harshness of his doctrine. If he replied, "Stone her not," they would cite Moses against him, decry him in popular opinion, and accuse him before the Sanhedrin as a false Messiah. The fact that the Law had fallen into disuse would not shelter him: for the Messiah was to come to uphold the Law and re-establish its authority.

Jesus showed himself indifferent: he bent down, and with his finger began to trace letters upon the ground. Those who had put the question to him renewed their enquiry. He lifted himself up: "He that is without sin among you," he said, "let him cast the first stone." And again he stooped down and wrote upon the ground.

The Scribes and Pharisees, seeing themselves unmasked

and caught in a snare, stole out prudently, indeed cowardly, one after the other, from the first to the last, beginning with the eldest.

Jesus remained alone with the woman standing before him. Wretchedness and goodness were face to face. Jesus, who was still bending down, raised himself, but refrained from looking upon her, as though to spare her shame. "Woman," said he, "where are those thine accusers? Hath no one condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

From this time forward, he continued his teaching, throwing into his words ever more and more directness and force; indeed, it was at Jerusalem, in presence of the religious teachers, who believed themselves initiated into every mystery of the Law and the Prophets, into every secret of the Book, that they attained their fullest power. It was no longer from nature and daily life that he borrowed his images, it was on Scripture itself, upon the knowledge of the Law and the national history, that he relied to declare what he was, and what he was to accomplish.

The rabbis taught that the Messiah was the Light, and that glory dwelt in him. Jesus alluded to this doctrine in his new discourses, when he asserted that he was the true pillar of fire, and the Light of the world. Israel symbolizes all mankind, the luminous cloud is the emblem of the Messiah. "I am the light of the world," he said: "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The pillar of fire guided Israel by night across the desert and led them to the promised land; Jesus will guide mankind through the darkness in which we are straying; show us that the Father awaits us in his Kingdom, and will mark out our course for us. We have but to follow him, if we would escape the errors which blind the reason, and the storms which the passions heap upon us. This Light of life, which he promises to those who follow him, is no dead science, abstract and sterile, it is a living and fruitful glory, which pervades the soul which faith has placed in communion with God.

He who had preached, in Galilee, the Sermon on the Mount, proclaimed the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, eclipsed by

his doctrine all the masters and the prophets, could say at Jerusalem, before the people and the hierarchy: "I am the Light of the world."

The Pharisees, however, could not endure that he should arrogate to himself the title and the glory of the Messiah. On hearing him speak thus of himself, they could not contain themselves; and thinking to overthrow the teaching of Jesus from its foundations, they said to him: "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." Jesus, in a first and decisive encounter with the same doctors, sent by the Sanhedrin, had already proved his title to credibility, and justified his mission, not only by the authority of John, universally recognised as a prophet, but also by his divine works, by the voice of his Father, and by the Scriptures. He did not renew his defence. He met the blind obstinacy of his enemies with the increasing firmness of his affirmations, and, formulating the truth with a power born of the consciousness of his own personality, he took the offensive. "Do not deceive yourselves," he said to them: "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I come and whither I go." Then, remembering one of their legal usages, by virtue of which they refused to accept the witness of unknown persons, he showed them the hidden cause which prevented them from believing in his assertions. "But ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go; for ye judge after the flesh."

"And yet," he added, "if I judge, if I bear witness, my judgment is true, my witness is of avail."

Then Jesus, relying, the better to convince them, upon the legal doctrines of his opponents, a doctrine consecrated moreover by the Law, said to them: "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true: I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." These are the two witnesses. In thus invoking the testimony of his Father, he was not only reminding his hearers of the voice which, at his baptism, had publicly proclaimed him the well-beloved Son, and of the miracles which proved the constant intervention of the Father's power in his life; he declared the inner character of his life, he again affirmed that he knew himself and his mission in the light of the Father who lived and spoke in him.

Jesus resumed the current of his reproaches against the obstinate Jews : " I have many things," he said, " to say and judge of you, but he that sent me is true ; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."

We must notice the earnestness with which Jesus, in his solemn teaching, relies upon his constant, perfect, and absolute inward communion with the Father ; he comes from him, he returns to him ; the Father has given him all ; it is he that sends and inspires him, that dictates his word and orders his life. This ineffable relation constitutes the very mystery of Jesus, for it implies his divine sonship, and it is the source of the truth, the goodness, the power, and the holiness with which his human nature overflows.

Such allusions were quite misunderstood by the Jews. The novelty and sublimity of such language lent itself to frequent mistakes in the minds of those who listened with a reason filled with sophistries, and a heart hardened and shut to all belief. Often in the crowd it was asked who was this person whose Messenger the new Prophet declared himself to be, and whom he vaguely referred to without naming. They dreamed, perhaps, according to the ideas of the time, of some mysterious being who was to precede the Messiah and with whom Jesus maintained a hidden connection ; they did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father.[1]

No amount of blindness and obstinacy could discourage or weary him. The knowledge of his future passion did not afflict him ; he even makes covert allusions to it ; he knows that, far from hampering his mission, it is to be the starting-point of his triumph, and he does not fear to announce to those who oppose and reject him to-day, that they shall acknowledge him to-morrow. Men are terrified by the impenetrable future that lies before them ; they see in it the grave of their glory and the annihilation of their works ; Jesus regards it with confidence, for the future is to compensate him for the defeat of the moment.

" When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him."

In spite of the hostility of his hearers, the words of Jesus

[1] John viii. 27.

were not always shattered against stubborn incredulity; if he let loose the storm, he also brought peace to more than one soul in this agitated crowd. "Many," says the Evangelist, "believed on him, as he spake these words"; and, touched by his teaching, recognised him as the Messiah. Some of the elders themselves were shaken. The power of assertion, the sincerity of accent, the radiance of the soul of Jesus, at last prevailed over their prejudices; they felt that the declarations of the great Prophet were not a vain boast.

He wished to prove the faith of these new believers, for he felt it was superficial and weak.

Such are the truths, at once severe and consoling, which he taught to this people. "If the Son, therefore," concluded he, "shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Otherwise there is no hope for them. Far from aiding in this work, and strengthening themselves in the word which gives deliverance, they allowed themselves once more to be overcome by their prejudices. They would have welcomed a Messiah who flattered them, they revolted against one who humbles their pretensions; his words took no root in them; they returned to their opposition and inveterate hatred. "Ye seek to kill me," said Jesus to them, "because my word hath no place in you."

Then, blow following upon blow, he struck at the root of the stubborn pride of those children of Abraham, and showed them who is their true father. You say you are the seed of Abraham, Jesus said to them: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." He seems to put them the question, "Is Abraham truly your father?" Yes, they cried, "Abraham is our father." "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Be like him, docile to the truth of God; respect, like him, his messengers. The hostility of his hearers broke forth; stung by the words of Jesus, they did not attempt to justify themselves, their offended pride rankled within them, they would not listen to anything, and they repeated with emphasis, "Abraham is our father."

"If ye were the children of Abraham," then said Jesus to them, pressing them still closely, "ye would do the works of Abraham.

"But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the

truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father."

The Jews, understanding that Jesus spoke to them of moral sonship, cried:

"We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."

"If God were your Father," Jesus replied, "ye would love me: for I proceeded and came forth from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot bear my word."

Say not that ye are the children of Abraham; no, nor call God your Father.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

He reproved them with severity: "Because I tell you the truth," he cries, "ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin?" The gage was not taken up. "And if I say the truth," he added, "wherefore do ye not believe me?" Jesus will tell them the reason in a few words, which unmask all the incredulity of his listeners. "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

These severe reproaches, which were directed against the pride of the Jews, on their most sensitive point, drew from them cries of insult and scorn. They cast this insult at Jesus:

"Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"

Jesus answered: "I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth."

"When he was reviled," says one of his witnesses, "he reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He remained in truth and in love, and appealed, with the martyr's gentleness, to the justice of his Father. In his calmness and power, instead of becoming angry, he reminded his insulters of the divine benefits which he was reserving for his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Being in communion with the Spirit of God himself, he will drink of

its inexhaustible source divine life, and infinite truth and love ; and this divine life will pervade even his mortal body, and raise it again for eternity.

But Jesus cannot convince these fanatics, who are blinded by their wicked spirit ; his clemency only exasperates them, and his promises seem madness to them. They pretend to distort everything that he says by giving it a material and coarse meaning. They cry, " Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou myself ? "

Jesus answered : I follow only the will of God. " If I honour myself, my honour is nothing ; it is my Father that honoureth me."

" Ye say that he is your God," he says, " yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him and keep his saying."

To the self-satisfied ignorance of his enemies, Jesus opposes with an absolute and tranquil certitude, the knowledge which he has of his Father ; and to their question, " Art thou greater than our father Abraham ? " he replies, cutting short their words :

" Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

Coarse, as ever, and commonplace, the Jews, in surprise, interrupted him with contemptuous indignation :

" Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ? " Jesus answered : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Abraham has been, Jesus is. Against the historical beginning of the father of the faithful, he sets the fact of his personal existence, eternal, without beginning, and without end. It is the unchangeable present. Such words recall the cry of the Psalm :

" Before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world were made, thou art God from everlasting to everlasting, world without end."

These words have inspired the prologue of the Gospel from which we borrow these narratives and these fragments of discourse ; they belong to that class which are not invented,

and which are explained only by madness or by inspiration. They are a part of that speech of Jesus which is above every human tongue, and which only believers can understand. No subtlety of exegesis can weaken them or render them plausible to the critics who deny the divine sonship of Jesus. His hearers took their part; they judged his words blasphemy; they could only fall at the knees of the Prophet or stone him. In the fury of their false zeal they took up stones to cast at him. Jesus withdrew, and, followed by his disciples, went out of the Temple.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE MIRACLE OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

The roads and gateways of cities in the East are beset with the blind, the crippled, and the infirm of all kinds, imploring pity from the passers-by, and asking for alms in a plaintive voice. The custom has not changed for centuries. As Jesus was leaving the Temple, he observed at one of the gates one of these unfortunate people, blind from his birth. "Master," said the disciples, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither hath this man sinned," he said, "nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

All human suffering, in the presence and under the influence of Jesus, becomes transformed; it moves him to pity; he heals it sometimes, he consoles it always, and man is not slow to recognise in this service the saving power of God. The life of the Master is but the web woven of the works of his goodness. He gave himself up to these works, never missing an occasion for them, for he knew that his passage on earth was short. He compared it to the day, and his death was in his eyes as the night.

He said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

He was now to give them a significant proof in the case of this blind man. He spat upon the earth, made clay of the spittle, and spread this clay over the eyes of the patient. "Go," said he, "wash in the Pool of Siloam." He went his way, washed, and came back seeing. It was the Sabbath day.

The sudden cure of the blind man was soon known. His neighbours and those who had previously seen him as a beggar, seated on the roadside or at a gateway, said to one another: "Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he."

They questioned him with curiosity. "How have thine eyes be opened?" He answered: "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the Pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not." They brought him then to the Pharisees, who in their turn asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

Confronted witn this miracle, the Pharisees were divided about Jesus. Some of them said, "This man is not of God, for he keepeth not the Sabbath day;" but others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" In their embarrassment they appealed to the blind man, saying, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." This reply disturbed them. Foreseeing the effect which such a miracle was destined to produce among the multitude, they challenged its truth. In order to strengthen themselves in their denial, thay called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now seeth, we know not. And who hath opened his eyes, we know not. Ask him; he is of age. Let him speak for himself."

The reticence of the parents, in their reply, was inspired by fear; for the Jews had already decreed in secret council the expulsion from the synagogue of any man who should proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. Having failed to extort anything from the parents, the Pharisees next thought of intimidating the man who had been born blind. They called him back and said to him, "Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner." Obviously their aim was to induce this simple soul to speak like themselves, and to outrage in the name of orthodox piety and blind obedience to a tyrannical authority, the man who had made him whole. But an invisible power protects weak and upright hearts. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, I now see."

The Pharisees, the judges, and the cultured, surprised at first by the strength of the public testimony to this marvellous

event, and still more by the very sight of those on whom it was accomplished, began to exert the prejudiced reasoning of their wisdom, their pretended learning or their infallible criticism. They exclaimed that it was impossible, and that this man was acting contrary to the laws, whether of their religion or the recognised laws of their learning and wisdom, and from these laws there was no appeal.

In spite of every obstacle, in spite of the doctors with their easily roused passions and their pride of learning, in spite of the hierarchy with its threats and intentions of violence, the work of Jesus went on and made progress in the capital. There, as elsewhere, the poorer sort were his predestined followers; he saw his flock grow larger, and he looked upon himself as the shepherd. He admired those simple natures who feared not to compromise themselves for his sake, and to follow him despite the calumnies and anathemas of their leaders. The sight of his faithful followers moved him to tenderness, and inspired him with one of his most touching parables, of the shepherd and his fold.[1]

This parable, borrowed in its minutest details from the pastoral life of the East, is one of those which set before us with the greatest charm the ineffable mystery of the work and the personality of Jesus. No name designates him more fitly in his gentleness than the name of shepherd. The sheepfold is the people of God folded and gathered together, like a chosen flock, within the enclosure and pale of the Law. The door of this enclosure is the Messiah; no entrance is possible, in fact, except on the conditions of believing and hoping in him. Faith in the future Saviour was the soul of the ancient law; the Jews lived only by that faith, for by it alone they belonged to the holy people. All those leaders who have despised him, the kings who betrayed their trusts, the false prophets, the false Messiahs, the rabbis with their vain traditions and materialistic worship, are only thieves and robbers who scale the walls of the sacred law. Instead of feeding the sheep, they are fed by them; instead of giving them life, they slaughter them; instead of leading, they lose them. Those who expected the Messiah were already inspired by the Messiah whom they longed to see; and those who, through him have come into the fold, true messengers and true believers, have found pasture and are saved.

[1] John x. 1-5.

But Jesus is not only the door, he is the shepherd; he has led his sheep far away from the narrow limits of the ancient fold; he calls them, and they hear and recognize his voice; he goes before them, leading them into new pastures where they find the fulness of life; he dies for them, and to save them. His fold is the Church, it is vast as the world, eternal as God; to fill it, he will go among the lost of mankind, where so many neglected sheep are awaiting him, to call them and lead them back. These are they to whom he refers when he says: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." They will be gathered by his own Spirit through the ministry of his apostles.

He will be the pasture, and his flock will live by him; at such a cost will Jesus be indeed the shepherd. The thought of death, which was always present with him, expresses itself here with a peculiar characteristic; he wishes us to know that he dies of his own free will, and that if his enemies, who are the wolves of his flock, are allowed to slay him, it is because he delivers himself into their hands, and because in so doing he is accomplishing the will of the Father. This last mysterious discourse overflows with love; it completes the series of Jesus' teachings at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, in the year 29 and the days following.

The result of this apostolate has been strongly characterized by the fourth Evangelist. Public opinion, shaken and agitated, begins to be divided. Some see in the words of the Prophet only a frenzy, a madness, an inspiration of Satan and they try to persuade the people of it: "Why do ye hearken to him?" they say "he is possessed of a devil, and is mad." Others again defend him, struck by the wisdom of his discourses, and the proofs of his mission which they see in his miracles: "No," say they, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" In the past as in the present, yesterday as to-day, Jesus must needs be opposed; and, in advancing his work, he appears ever more and more the great signal for division.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE FIRST RETREAT OF JESUS INTO PERAEA

JESUS, in declaring himself publicly in the Temple the Son of the living God, before the authorities and the whole nation, with clearness and force, without equivocation and without metaphor, had accomplished one of the most necessary and at the same time the most hazardous acts of his mission. In order to make people believe in himself and his Messianic mission, he was bound to assert himself, but in asserting himself he was courting certain death. The hierarchy repelled and despised him. He was nothing more in their eyes but a false prophet and a blasphemer; and the Law punished false prophets with death. He did not wish to hasten the catastrophe. He departed from Jerusalem, leaving the town echoing with his name, and public opinion confused and rent asunder by his teaching, which enlightened some and blinded and offended others.

It will be remembered that on his way to the Feast of Tabernacles, he had, as he journeyed, sent seventy disciples on a mission into the towns and villages which he himself intended to visit. Southern Peraea is in all probability the only part of all Judaea which had not yet heard the good news.

It was to Peraea that Jesus retired, and there too the seventy disciples came to rejoin him. The meeting was a delight to the Master and his servants. The success of the messengers had been complete and brilliant. They appeared surprised and proud at the same time at the result of their mission. "Lord," said they to Jesus, "even the evil spirits have submitted to us in thy name." Jesus, knowing that he was the sovereign Master of all evil spirits, and the deliverer from evil, answered them: "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

The triumph of his disciples is only the prelude of his own

future victory; the kingdom of Satan will be destroyed; and henceforward, in Jesus, the Kingdom of God begins on the ruin of that kingdom. "Fear not," said he, in symbolic language, "I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and every power of the enemy. Neither force nor fraud will prevail against you. Nothing shall harm you. Nevertheless rejoice not that devils have submitted to you; rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

However glorious the function of those who labour at the work of the Kingdom, of what profit is it to the labourer if he is not himself a part of the Kingdom, and if his name is to be blotted out from the book of God?

The thought of his future triumph, the sight of his faithful disciples, following upon those days which he had just passed at Jerusalem, an object of hostility, contempt, irony, ignorance, and hatred, made Jesus thrill with joy. He experienced, says the Evangelist, a spiritual ecstasy. He cried, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

When he saw his disciples gathered around him, initiated into his language and his work, he loved, if they were alone together, to speak to them of the joy and glory of their predestination. "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." These few words revive for us the happy hours in which Jesus enveloped his disciples with the radiance of his soul, and, filling them with his own cheerfulness, taught them to set store by their vocation. Even if the Pharisees should scorn and despise them, they can rejoice, for they are the privileged of God, and more favoured than prophets and kings.

After an exorcism which had caused the people to wonder, the Pharisees came up and renewed their attacks, as in Judaea and Galilee. Some said: "He that casteth out devils through Beelzebub." Others said: "Let him show to us a sign from heaven."

It seems almost as though there was an understanding among the Pharisees to treat Jesus as one possessed; they everywhere cast this insulting blasphemy in his teeth; in Galilee, in Judaea, in the open Temple, and again in Peraea. All that Jesus could say they were ready to call a lie; all that he could do they were ready to regard as evil. No one had been pursued by them with such implacable hatred. He cast out devils at a word, freed the oppressed from their tyranny, and they saw in this holy deed only an act of Satan. He never ceased to rebuke this outrage which he called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the sin which was unpardonable and eternal; and he repels it here once more with the same vehement logic, and confounds his enemies by their own doctrine: If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, Satan is divided against himself. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" The Kingdom of Satan is destroyed. And that is what I came to accomplish.

And, alluding to the Jewish exorcists, who made a trade of casting out devils for hire, and who found nevertheless an honourable welcome, he added ironically: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges."

As he spoke, a cry rose from the multitude. A woman of the people, one of those perhaps whom the Prophet had healed, said in a loud voice: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." How often was Jesus thus applauded! This testimony of an unknown woman was sweeter to him than the blasphemy of the Pharisees was hateful. He drew attention to the cry to exalt her who had uttered it: "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." To be the mother of Jesus implies directly only a human relation; but to hear and keep the word of God implies communion with his divine Spirit. One single creature has been called to the crowning privilege of maternity; but every soul is called to receive the Spirit, and there is more happiness in receiving the living God than in giving birth to Christ.

The multitude was now gathered around the Prophet; and after having confounded the Pharisees who treated him

as an accomplice of Satan, he set himself to unmask publicly the perfidy of those who persisted in asking from him a sign from heaven as a proof of his mission. Jesus had shown all the Messianic signs announced by the prophets again and again. Before all eyes, each more glorious than the last, they shone forth at every step, at every moment, such as Isaiah had described them six centuries before. But the sophistry of the Pharisees, blind and disdainful as it was, either passed over, or falsified them, by attributing them to the power of Satan. Convinced that heaven belonged to God, and persuaded that Jesus was a blasphemer, they pursued him with the challenge : Give us then a sign from heaven where God alone is Lord, and which will prove that God is indeed with thee.

This demand, inspired only by a thirst for the marvellous, by prejudice, incredulity, and spite, made Jesus indignant ; he repelled it with inflexible firmness : " This is an evil generation," he said to the multitude ; " they seek a sign ; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation."

The vehemence of his reproaches was so great, that a doctor of the Law, a scribe, one of those professional sages who had the keeping of the Scriptures and the traditions of the Pharisees, interrupted him indignantly. " Master," he cried, " thus saying thou reproachest us also." The only reply of Jesus was to multiply and intensify his denunciations : " Woe unto you also, ye lawyers ! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them."

And with bitter irony unmasking the vanity of those honours which they thought to confer on these holy victims, he added : " Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers : for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres."

The death of the prophets recalled to Jesus his own and his disciples' persecution ; he was to be himself also a victim of the same murderous fanaticism, and he prophesied it to his thunder-stricken and angry auditors. He cried : " Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and

apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute : that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation ; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple : verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

The greatest crime of the doctors, that which drew from Jesus the last of his anathemas, was their prevarication ; for they hindered by it the Messianic work and turned the people away from it. " Woe unto you, lawyers ! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge : ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering ye hindered." The Scriptures should have taught them the knowledge of the Kingdom, and since they had reserved the monopoly of them for themselves, and held the key thereof, they themselves should have been the first to enter and to bring in those who were under their directions. They had been false to their mission ; if the Saviour has been despised and rejected, if the nation has been false to its destiny, the blame rests with them ; they would have lost not only their own people but the whole world, if the blindness and obstinacy of man could ever prevent the work of God and cross his designs.

We can see that the situation was becoming more serious and critical. In proportion as the catastrophe came nearer and nearer, Jesus drew his disciples closer and closer to him, and tried to imbue them with his own strong and tender nature. The multitude did not leave him ; and, despite the hatred with which he was pursued by their leaders, they listened to the Prophet's words and yielded to his attraction. He taught them on the way, roused them from the sense of their misery, and showed them the path and the entrance into the new Kingdom. Nothing could hinder him from his great work and his mission. Time pressed, and he must hasten on.

A man of the people drawing near to ask him to order his brother to share the paternal inheritance with him, he answered : " Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you ? " Was the Messenger of God come into this world to occupy himself with earthly interests ? His destiny was a divine one ; it was not the life of a day and its wretched blessings that he brought, it was eternal life and the Kingdom of the Father. But he knew that man is eager for enjoyment,

and, instead of controlling the disputes to which this eagerness gave rise, he taught him to lift his thoughts above the world and learn the secret of eternity.

He said to them: "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." For all things here on earth fly from us at the very moment when we think them within our grasp. On this subject he spoke to them the following parable: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

He would show them also the eternal object toward which souls which have been freed from the tyranny of need should aim: "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." What has he to fear who, in spite of earthly destitution, is called to reign in God? "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The little flock had grown stronger since the time when Jesus formed it and there had been revealed to it the secret of this divine glory, it had not had, nor would have, any respite from the conflict. This is why he spoke as follows to his disciples: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come

forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." The coming of the Master is uncertain, we must always be prepared. "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

We here come upon the first allusion made by Jesus to his return to the earth which he was about to quit, leaving his apostles like faithful and wise stewards. They are the men who will nourish with the bread of truth the menservants and handmaids of God, a sublime task which will constitute their glory, if they accomplish it, and their condemnation if they should betray it. It is difficult to reconstruct, without positive records, the scenes of intimate communion with the disciples, in which the Master indulged without reserve in confidences which grew so much the more moving as the situation became more painful and hazardous. We can imagine them, however, from a few expressions of deep import which bring before us vividly his feelings, his care for others, and his sorrows. The bitterness of the conflict of which he was the object must have sometimes brought apprehension to the minds of the little flock; at such moments, Jesus, full of resolution, would compare himself to a burning brand, and say:

"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" His vehement denunciations of the Pharisees and of all his relentless enemies added fuel to the flame, and he was determined to add yet more. His mind was truly devouring fire, and he had no other wish, ever since he had declared himself the Messenger of his Father, but to spread the flame. He also spoke metaphorically of his approaching death. He saw it before him in all its horror, and called it a baptism. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," he said, and in spite of the awful nature of such a thought, he continued, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

One Sabbath day, in the course of his journey through Peraea, he was teaching in a synagogue, and there came into

the assembly a woman who had been infirm for eighteen years. She was bowed down and could not lift herself up. Jesus, seeing her, called her : " Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He laid his hands upon her, and that instant she stood upright and glorified God. The ruler of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed this infirm woman on the Sabbath day, and said to the people : " There are six days in which men ought to work : in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." The Pharisees must have approved the wisdom and firmness of the ruler of the synagogue, and the superstitious zeal which placed the Sabbath rest above everything, even the righteous work of mercy. " Thou hypocrite," Jesus replied with indignation, " doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering ? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day ? "

No restriction avails against goodness and virtue : any religion which, to honour God, should dare to enact one, must be impious. Pharisaism was full of such impiety in disguise ; and in striking this well-directed blow against it in defence of conscience, Jesus showed himself once more a true deliverer. His enemies remained confounded, but did not surrender. The people alone applauded him, astonished in their good faith by the miracles, and dazzled in their simple minds by the truth.

Despite the sadness in which he was plunged by the piteous spectacle of the general impenitence and incredulity, Jesus pursued without hesitation and without flagging what he loved to call the work of the Kingdom of God. He knew the designs of the Father ; he had a perfect insight into laws which govern the world ; he knew that the first results of the work must be but small. " It is like a grain of mustard seed," he said, " which a man took, and cast into his garden ; and it grew, and waxed a great tree ; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." He knew also that his power was irresistible, and he often said of it : " It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

No human being in his life-time has been so deeply despised, rejected, misunderstood, and scorned as Jesus. None has evinced a greater serenity, a surer confidence in the final triumph beyond the grave.

Time has justified him in this confidence; it has been revenged in after ages with a great and sacred vengeance.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE LAST ATTEMPT UPON JERUSALEM

EVER since Jesus had quitted Galilee, Jerusalem was the one object of his thoughts; and Peraea, to which he had withdrawn on several occasions, was only a place of refuge for him against the hatred and violence which was so quickly roused against him in the capital. After some weeks, he wished to revisit Jerusalem and make one last attempt to gain it. He set out upon his journey, and travelled by easy stages, stopping in the towns and villages which lay in his route. One of the Evangelists, St. Luke, has added to this journey without, however, indicating either the halts or other particulars; two episodes only remained in the memory of the disciples and have been recorded by the same writer; they both reflect all the gravity and gloom of the time in the eyes of Jesus. He found himself rejected and despised; his faithful adherents were but a handful; power, learning, and fortune were closed against his influence. The popular favour which he met with did not go far enough to transform the multitude into a legion of disciples. He was often heard to deplore the small number of those who rallied to his word. These laments wounded the national vanity; the greater number seeing in the happiness of the Messianic era an appanage of the chosen people, and taking upon themselves to imagine that all Israel, without exception, was to enter into the glory of the new Kingdom.

A certain man made himself the echo of these vain hopes, plainly contradicted as they were by the life and teaching of Jesus. "Lord," said he to him, "are there few that be saved?" Jesus did not give a direct reply to his anonymous questioner. The important point was not to know whether few or many should be chosen, but to labour to be one of the chosen. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," he cried, turning to the multitude, "for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

The sole question for man is, how he shall be incorporated into the Kingdom ; if he enters, he will find life in the joy of the Father's eternal feast, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and the elect of the four quarters of the world ; if he remain without, he will be thrust out afar to partake of endless pain and despair. Let man beware : the entrance into the house of the Father and the palace of his Kingdom is difficult, for the gate is narrow. This gate is faith in Jesus : the poor, unknown, humiliated, suffering Messiah. In order that he may pass through this gate, man must reduce himself to nothingness, he must lose himself in the word of Jesus, and give up all for him. Without complete renunciation he may not enter. This is shown by the example of the contemporaries of the Master ; the greater number recoiled before the sacrifice of faith, prizing their ritual, their learning, and their vices above the teaching of the Saviour. They have not been admitted into the glory of the Kingdom.

The ill-success of his mission in the midst of Israel must have made him sad, but it could not overwhelm him. In spite of the difficulties of entering the Kingdom, in spite of the refusal of those first invited, the work of the Messiah was to be accomplished, and the hall of the festival was not to remain empty. He saw already his elect come together from the four quarters of the world, and sit down beside the patriarchs and prophets. The outcast Gentile world will be gathered in, while the privileged race is rejected, and thus, as he often loved to say, without fear of offending the sentiment of the nation, " the last shall be first, and the first last."

On this same day certain of the Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him : " Get thee out, and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee." This step was only a feint on the part of Herod and the Pharisees ; it is not very probable that the tetrarch nourished thoughts of killing Jesus, his was no cruel nature. The death of John the Baptist, wrung as it was from his weakness, ever preyed upon his mind. But the presence of the Prophet in his dominions caused him fear ; he dreaded Jesus, he imagined that he was John come to life again. The Pharisees, his flatterers, must have traded upon his superstitious fears ; and, in order to draw Jesus into Judaea, where he was completely in the power of the Sanhedrin, they were come to threaten him with the prince's

anger. Jesus saw through the treachery of their intentions: "Go ye," he said to these cunning emissaries, "and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

His days were numbered, it was in no man's power to diminish them; his course was neither to be hastened nor hindered. He feared nothing: the fear of death did not touch him, he went to meet his fate as calm, as irresistible, as omnipotent as the God who sent him. He continued his route towards Jerusalem, where he soon arrived. It was in the depth of winter, and they were keeping the Feast of the Dedication, which fell, in the year 29, upon the 20th of December.

According to his custom, he had gone up to the Temple, and was walking in the eastern gallery, under Solomon's Porch. The Jews, having recognised him, surrounded him, and closing him in their midst as in a circle, "How long," they demanded vehemently, "dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." This violent demand proves that the Judaeuns had neither received nor understood the Messiahship of Jesus, that is, the highly spiritual character of his work and the divinity of his person; they do not seek to be enlightened, they call upon Jesus to pronounce himself distinctly, and to say whether he is the Messiah such as they understand him, or no; they do not rally to the Prophet, they require him to rally to them. Here we see repeated the struggle which burst forth in Galilee, on a former occasion, between the idea of the Messiah of which Jesus is the realisation, and the misleading idea which is present to the minds of the Jews. The Galilaeans, at least, were sincere when they wished to take Jesus by force and proclaim him king; the Judaeans are probably insincere. By their requiring a formal declaration, we may suspect in their minds that they contemplated making use of it against Jesus and of denouncing him to the Roman authority.

The reply of the Master was such as was to be expected from his profound wisdom. He could add nothing to the solemn testimony already given with so much emphasis at the Feast of Tabernacles. He had there affirmed with irresistible clearness the divinity of his nature, his origin, and his mission.

He had fully expounded his great work of salvation. If he had, in the presence of the multitude, carefully eschewed the use of the word Messiah, it was not because he renounced the title, but because he feared to make use of an expression the meaning of which had been corrupted by prejudice. No, he was not the Messiah as religious and patriotic fervour had conceived him, but the Messiah as he had been sent from the Father. "I have spoken unto you," he replied to his questioners, "and ye do not believe." He still persevered in his endeavours to dispel their illusions and their false doctrine, and to lead them to the truth; but he found them ever reluctant and immovable. Not even his miracle could convince them. Jesus in sadness reproached them with their obstinacy, saying: "The works that I do in my Father's name they bear witness of me; why then do you not believe?"

Soon their fanaticism burst forth, and they took up stones to stone him. Impassible in the presence of these threats, Jesus did not move. Such was his calmness and firmness that these madmen let the stones fall from their hands. "Many good works," he said, with mingled irony and indignation, "have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" Such was, in fact, the perversity of their minds that, far from enlightening them, the holy acts of Jesus only exasperated them, intensifying their hatred and provoking their rage. "For a good work," said they, disconcerted, "we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." These fanatics were mistaken; here was no man who was making himself a God; but God himself, who was revealing himself in person in the Man-Jesus.

Blasphemy among the Jews consisted, in their own words, in attacking "the foundation." Now, the consecrated order was God, the Temple, and the Law. To deny the unity of God and the eternity of the Temple and the Law, was the great religious crime of the day. On hearing Jesus making himself equal to God, and proclaiming himself the same being with God, they cried out, "Blasphemy!" Evidently these degenerate doctors of the Law had misunderstood the true ideal of their Messiah. In periods of decadence the highest truths become obscured, the most important questions are thrust aside, and feeble and degenerate minds are occupied in the discussion of empty subtleties and accessory details,

conferring importance on puerilities, and forgetting what is vital and essential. The Jewish schools and their teachers, the priesthood and its leaders, present us with such a spectacle. The divinity of the Messianic hero, clearly taught by the Prophets, and solemnly proclaimed by Jesus, appeared to them to be simple blasphemy; they closed their eyes and turned away from him, because he did not conform to their prejudices and their national vanity.

By thus invoking before the outraged doctors the daring names which God himself, in the Scriptures, gives to his human representatives, Jesus appealed to one of the most deeply-rooted ideas in the Jewish mind. To Israel God is a living and personal being, whose words and influence are unceasingly manifested to his people, and those to whom they are addressed borrow from them a divine character: king, judge, or prophet becomes the instrument of God, and is, in a sense, uplifted to him. If then, even in virtue of such partial union, they have justly been named gods, it cannot be that he whom the Father has sanctified, in whom he has placed the fulness of his Spirit, and whom he has sent into the world, should be justly accused of blasphemy, in saying that he is the Son of God. The argument is unanswerable.

He made a last effort after this to bring these prejudiced minds to recognise in him that union with the Father which was the source of his Messianic mission. And when he could not persuade them nor impress his words on their conscience, he said unto them: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." They would neither see nor hear. They withdrew in exasperation, scheming how to take him and bring him before the Sanhedrin; but Jesus escaped them. Surrounded by his disciples, he left the Temple and the city, and, passing through Jericho, made towards the country on the other side of Jordan.

As he withdrew from Jerusalem he turned back towards it, his soul filled with ineffable sadness; this last attempt had only revealed to him its invincible obstinacy. His grief drew from him a bitter lament:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I

have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

It was, in fact, the last time that he appeared in the Temple or within the city walls. He was not to come back there save to die. The beloved and ungrateful city heard his sublimest teachings, and she scorned them; she witnessed his most ardent appeals, and rejected them. She was to know the terrible retribution of despised love; in her blindness and hatred she was storing up her awful destiny against the day of wrath.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE RETREAT OF JESUS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN

Jesus, on quitting Jerusalem, came to take up his abode on the other side of the Jordan, upon the borders of Judaea. The place has been clearly indicated by the fourth Evangelist as Bethabara ; the same place where John, two years before, had solemnized his baptism. The prophet's name had survived among the people ; it was remembered that he had prophesied of the Kingdom of God, of the coming of the Messiah, and of the Messiah himself. The multitude ran to meet Jesus ; when they saw and heard him they were struck with the truth of those things which the Forerunner had foretold and testified ; he wrought no miracles, they said, but all that he declared was true. Jesus made many disciples there, reaping the harvest which John had sown. On the point of finishing his career, he found himself on these same banks of the Jordan which had witnessed his public consecration. Within three months afterwards his task was finished ; Two busy years had suffered for its completion.

The Pharisees ceased not to lie in wait for him and circumvent him with insidious questions ; they frequently invited him to their tables in order to take him by surprise and to spy into his views more closely. Jesus lent himself to these invitations of a feigned good-will. St. Luke has preserved for us the detailed narrative of one of these feasts. The wisdom of the Master shone forth, and would have opened their eyes, if they only would have allowed them to be opened.

One of the chief men of the party had besought Jesus to come and eat bread in his house ; he had designedly, and of treacherous intent, chosen the Sabbath day. All at once they brought into the presence of the Master a man sick of the dropsy, convinced that, in his compassion, he would not fail to heal him. Jesus saw through the designs of these impostors : he assumed the offensive by suddenly putting the

question to the Scribes and Pharisees who were present: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" The doctors held their peace; but he, taking the sick man by the hand, healed him and let him go.

Here was a stumbling-block for these formalists. Jesus answered their thoughts by a decisive sentence: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" The doctors could not answer: no amount of subtlety could avail against these truths, which flash upon the conscience and the mind with the vividness of lightning. The guests were numerous, and Jesus, observing that they chose the highest places, commented on this display of vanity, veiling the moral under a parable:

"When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

There is no question here of a lesson in worldly wisdom; the words of the Master always explained some eternal truth, some great law in the government of God, and took the thoughts of men beyond the narrow circle of terrestrial things. "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" these words characterise the life of Jesus, his very being, his destiny, and his work, in the midst of this world given up to all the excesses and infatuations of pride. Humility is the absolute condition of entrance to his Kingdom.

After this lesson, the Master, wholly absorbed in his work, seems to have wished to lead the thoughts of his host towards this subject; he turned towards him and gave him this counsel, the apparent strangeness of which must at once have seized his attention:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor,

the maimed, the lame, the blind : and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

The goodness of the heavenly Father is infinite. The privilege of the wretched and the disowned appears here, as always, the great mark of the Kingdom ; it will remain such to the end of the ages, to the deep offence of those who understand not the things of God. All those who are rich, powerful, learned, haughty, strong, from the time that they prefer their riches, power, learning, strength, or personality to the hidden blessings and mysterious joys which God reserves for his faithful ones, will be rejected. If they wish to obey the words of the servant who is sent to bring them to the feast, they must renounce everything, regard as nothing all that they feel, or possess, or are ; their human learning, their power, their very virtue, to take their place among the simple souls, the beggars and sinners, the children of whom Jesus said, " Of these is the Kingdom of heaven." As for the rest, he is not afraid to say to them : " None of these men shall taste of my supper."

We do not know what was the effect upon the Pharisees, seated at the same table with Jesus, of these simple and profound discourses, these exquisite parables which left susceptible minds the liberty to know and judge themselves. Sometimes they were charmed or troubled, more often growing hostile, contemptuous, and ironical, they pretended not to understand, and looked down upon the new Master whose success was so offensive to them. But he does not fail any the more to apply his austere doctrine to the multitude. Seeing them burning to follow him, he forces himself to transform into virtue and moral nature, the energy, enthusiastic sympathy, and admiration which they feel, and shows them at what cost they will be able to win this Kingdom to which he invites them, and into which they seem so impatient to enter.

Those who wished to be his disciples would see father, mother, wife, children, brother, and sister rise up against them. " They must reject them, to follow me," he said. " They must hate their very life ; and take up their cross and follow me." He compared the work of the Kingdom to the building of a tower : " For which of you," he said, " intending

to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Again, he spoke of the Kingdom as a war against a powerful king: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

His goodness inspired him with most moving parables to justify himself; he loved to call them his lost sheep, and lost money: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? and when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Of all human miseries the greatest is that of the man without God; it sums all others and aggravates them, for there is in it something infinite. The pity of Jesus for sinners is the dominating feature of his character; it overflows from him, and is always shown as more and more moving and profound in his language and in his acts. To save, to heal, to enlighten, to lead to God all who are in Israel and on the whole earth; all who are lost, sick, feeble, in darkness; this is his ardent and constant wish. How they despised him, these self-righteous men, and how they outraged him when, in their

hardness of heart, they dared to taunt him, and blame what is his genius, his very essence !

He often longed to move these obdurate souls and to make them listen to the purposes of the mercy of God. In these very days, more saddened by their blindness, he told them the parable of the prodigal son[1] in the presence of the publicans and sinners.

The infinite mercy of God pervades all this narrative. The images which express it are eternal. Of all pictures of the goodness of God who pardons, and the humility of man who repents, and the joy of heaven and earth, after the repentance of man and pardon of God, we shall find none so expressive or so moving.

All true converts have said to God, "I have sinned ; make me as one of thy hired servants ; I am no more worthy to be called thy son." All these have been raised by the Father in their humility, and have felt the divine embrace of the Spirit ; they know what is the robe with which he clothes them, the ring placed on their finger, and the shoes which prepare them to go forth as messengers of peace. They hear within themselves, in the midst of the mirth and songs of festival, the voice of the Father, saying : "This my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found." We shall never know how many minds this history of the prodigal has stirred, how many lost souls it has healed, how many despairing hearts it has cheered, how many penitents it has encouraged ; it makes another day to dawn for the most guilty and the most dishonourable.

The discourses which the third Evangelist alone has preserved for us have a twofold interest. They help us to penetrate deeper into the teaching and the mind of Jesus, and they bring sharply before our eyes his new position in Peraea. The Master was surrounded by his disciples ; we see them pressing upon his steps as in Galilee, people of low condition, tax-collectors and publicans. The higher ranks of society, the elders of the synagogue and Pharisees, maintained towards him a hostile and defiant attitude ; they murmured and argued indignantly, they plotted against him and treated him despitefully, but we hear no threats. Jesus had nothing to fear from them ; he could, without hastening the impend-

[1] Luke xv. 11-13.

ing crisis, the hour of which was known to him, have redoubled his reproaches ; but his voice grew softer as he spoke to his disciples, old and new, chosen, almost without an exception, from among those poor people by whom he loved to be followed. As for the converted tax-gatherers, he recommended them to employ to good purpose for the future their worldly substance which they had amassed unjustly. He feared not to use as a stimulant, for these natures scarcely yet emerged from their wicked lives, the example of the wicked themselves : " There was a certain rich man," he said, " which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee ? give an account of thy stewardship ; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do ? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship : I cannot dig ; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord ? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another, And how much owest thou ? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely : for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Those who are familiar with the teaching of Jesus will understand this language ; he often used to say, " That which ye do unto the poorest, ye do it unto me ; " and so the rich man, who by his generosity towards the poor has made friends of them on earth, will have Jesus and the angels for his friends in heaven. When, at his death, the Father gives him his reward, he will be received into the everlasting habitations by their rightful Master.

It is not necessary to take literally the symbolic language

which Jesus borrowed from the literature of his time and country. His thoughts transcend their expression; and require to be disengaged from it. In the lover of pomp, luxuriously and gaily clothed, living sumptuously, without pity for the poor man covered with sores and dying of hunger at his gate, less compassionate even than the dog that licks his open wounds, the Sadducee can recognise himself. He will learn to what his pitiless epicureanism is leading him; he will be tortured and given over to the inexorable justice of God, in that life beyond the tomb in which he refuses to believe, but which Jesus brings with startling vividness before his eyes. Those wretched people, again, who follow the Master, and whose only share was poverty, hunger, and suffering, but who put their trust in him, may be seen typified in the beggar, Lazarus. Death will deliver them and open to them Abraham's bosom, that touching emblem of the goodness of the heavenly Father. Jesus, however, does not mean to say that the rich man, by the mere reason of his riches, incurs reprobation; and that the poor man, because of his poverty alone, will enter into the felicity of the Father. The rich man is cast out because, in his voluptuous selfishness, he was grown dead to all pity; the poor man is saved for having put his hope in God and justified by his life his name of Lazarus.

The disciples, as they witnessed the growth of these struggles between their Master and all who were influential, all who were rich, all who were zealous for learning, religion, and the Law, out of the whole nation, must more than once have felt that the tide was against them. So powerful an opposition was calculated to shake the hearts of neophytes, but Jesus, in his close converse with them, reassured and strengthened them, reminding them of the great work which he was come to accomplish, a work of division, separation, and war. He said to them: "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

Perpetual hostility is often found to embitter and harden the hearts even of the best; Jesus remained kind and compassionate. He gave an example of this to his followers,

urging them to forgive at all times : " If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, forgive him."

The apostles, who lived with him in profound and intimate communion, felt that he was their strength and their wisdom. Ravished by his words, charmed and overcome, they cried : " Lord, increase our faith ; " and he, to let them know the boundless power of faith, said to them : " If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea ; and it should obey you."

Faith, which puts man in communion of will and soul with God, is able to partake of his infinite power : it plucks up not only trees, it removes not only mountains, it lifts up to God the world of spirits. The miracles which it performs in the physical world are of little worth compared to the miracles of the moral world. The Master, who had unveiled to his apostles their divine greatness, fearing they should be exalted, recalled them to the sweetness and humility which became the true servant of God : " Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat ? and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken ; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink ? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him ? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do."

By such lessons unknown to human wisdom, Jesus formed his disciples and moulded the new man. Before his coming, man, always selfish and interested, even in his religion, thought only of his privileges and his merits, and, like a hireling, claimed their reward from God. In the school of Jesus, whatever be the splendour of his service, man stands abased in utter insignificance before him to whom he owes everything and who could owe him nothing. It is enough for him to perform his will ; love inspires him, and the last word of love is to forget ourselves in God.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

THE course of this journey can be filled up by the united suggestions of the third and fourth Evangelists. St. John notices the point of departure, St. Luke the journey and arrival. The point of departure was Ephraim, on the northern frontier of Judaea ; the road describes a vast circle through Samaria, Galilee, and the Valley of the Jordan ; the goal was Bethphage. Instead of directing his course towards Jerusalem, from which he was only five or six hours distant, Jesus appeared to be going away from it. He set out northwards, through Samaria, and, having gone as far north as the plain of Jezreel, in Galilee, descended, no doubt, by the Wady-Djaloud into the valley of the Jordan, and proceeded towards Jericho by the great highway of the caravans from Galilee.

We naturally wonder what motive had determined Jesus to take this circuitous route. It is probable that before giving to his entry into the holy city an unusually splendid, indeed a triumphal character, he wished to appear again in the midst of the multitude of the Galilaeans in order to draw attention to his journey, and to rally the numerous disciples who were already among the pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem. What his brothers had asked of him six months before, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, when they said, " Show thyself to the world," he was about to accomplish in his own fashion ; but this manifestation of himself was a secret which he kept up to the last stage of his journey. The pilgrimage lasted several days. It was sprinkled with diverse and interesting episodes which St. Luke has carefully described for us.

As he passed through a village, the name of which the Evangelist does not tell us, but which an old tradition accredited among the Christians of Palestine supposes to be Djennin, ten lepers came before Jesus. It is still the custom

at this very day, in the East, for these unhappy creatures to unite and live together, wandering along the roads and at the entrances of towns. They stood afar off and cried in a loud voice: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Their misery and their faith moved him to say: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they sent, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

Ingratitude was poignantly felt by him. We can read in the words, "this stranger," an intense sadness. This mournful incident recalled to him his whole mission. He had lavished unsparingly his benefits on Israel, and his people rejected him. He looked kindly upon the Samaritan who fell at his feet to express his acknowledgment and faith, for he saw in him all those poor outcasts, those strangers, those Gentiles who were to come eagerly to meet him when the children of the household would obstinately persist in despising him. He raised up the healed and believing leper: "Arise," said he to him, "and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

This incident had its place marked out for it in the narrative of St. Luke. At the very time that the disciple of the apostle Paul was preparing his Gospel, the work of salvation was spreading according to the same law which had presided over the life of the Saviour. Rejected in Judaea, opposed with rage by the Jews, the words of the Kingdom met with a striking reception in Samaria, and stirred the whole Gentile world.

As he pursued his journey, Jesus was interrogated on the subject of the Kingdom of God: "When is it to come?" asked the Pharisees, ironically. For two years thay had seen the Prophet at work, announcing the reign of the Messiah, which must, they thought, set their country free, break every yoke, dash in pieces every enemy, and open to Israel an unheard-of era of happiness; yet none of these great dreams had been realized. The Galilaean, as they called him, had

gathered round him only fishermen and outcasts, men of little education and low condition. They triumphed over this failure, and made a mockery of it. Jesus replied to them by reminding them again of the spiritual nature of his Kingdom, saying: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."

It is in the deep of the conscience that the Kingdom of which Jesus is the Messiah is inaugurated and founded. It is to the conscience that he speaks and demands repentance and faith; from the time it opens to him the soul receives his Spirit, and the Kingdom of God begins. The Pharisees, in their formalism and narrow patriotism, might refuse to understand; but the work went on in spite of them, and in their very midst; Jesus, surrounded by his followers, was its visible realization. He must have pointed out his disciples to those questioners, as they turned from him with scorn.

"The days will come," he said to them, "when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, the hour of his glory, his power, and his triumph, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them."

They must not, however, fail in the trial; for if the first coming of the Messiah was brought to pass in weakness and strife, and if the faithful, who acknowledged him, must form with him the Kingdom of God through the same weakness and strife, the second coming will be in majesty and in victory over all his enemies; then shall the Kingdom itself appear in majesty and victory.

The greatness and austerity of the duties which Jesus inculcated in his disciples, the long-continued endurance of the trials which would assail them in this world, given up, as it is, to the harsh selfishness of material and sensual living, must have inspired them with some apprehension. He recommended them to pray. "Pray," said he to them, "pray always, and faint not." "Have faith, for God hears you." And he told them this parable:

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

These last words of Jesus let us see that the believers themselves, even the faithful, will grow weary perhaps in waiting for God's great day; their faith will be tired out by the long expectation of eternal justice. Seeing the ages and the heavens roll by without bringing him who is to be their deliverer and their judge, will they not lose the fiery zeal which longs for deliverance? Always oppressed and down-trodden, will they not fall into lethargy? This question is a warning that he gives to his own, another way of saying once again, "Pray, believe, and hope unto the end."

On the same journey, Jesus and his little caravan often came into contact with the Pharisees, who, like them, were going to Jerusalem. He always found them full of self-sufficiency, satisfied with their own righteousness, and unsparing of their contempt for others. His disciples had doubtless their share of this contempt; his sympathy for the lowly, his aversion for the proud, inspired him with one of those parables in which Pharisaism has been painted in unfading colours, and with marvellous truth, as he lashed it with divine irony:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the

other : for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

During one of the halts on the journey, little children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands on them. The faith of the people is everywhere the same ; they hasten instinctively to him whom they believe to be the Messenger of God. His presence moves them ; they bring to the Prophet the most precious thing they have ; they feel that his hand, laid on the heads of their children, will be to them an assurance of happiness. The disciples, seeing the great press of the multitude, kept them back. Jesus was indignant. He said : " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." He embraced them, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

One day, after a halt, as he was going forth from the house in which he had received hospitality, to resume his journey, a young man, one of the chiefs of the people, ran to him and fell at his feet, and said, " Good Master, what shall I do to possess eternal life ? " This question showed a nature out of the common, and a truthful soul. The teachings of the schools on the merit of ceremonial observances, and the holiness that was conferred by ritual, did not satisfy his conscience ; surely, he must have heard the Master speak of life eternal in tones which affected him. The secret of eternal life is not within the power of human genius ; no man, however great, can reveal it. Life eternal is in God, and the means to gain it is dependent on his impenetrable will. In undertaking to reply to the question put to him, Jesus rises above man and his genius ; he declares himself the Master of eternal life, equal with God. This is doubtless what he wishes to suggest to the young man who questions him : " Wherefore callest thou me good ? " he said. " None is good, save one, that is God." And so God alone, and the Son who has received all from the Father, can show us the infinite good which is life eternal. " Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up ; what lack I yet ?

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing : sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful : for he was very rich."

The disciples were greatly struck with the reflection of Jesus ; they themselves, being all alike, poor, grew sad as they thought upon the fate of the rich. This noble emotion touched his heart. "My little children," he continued, tenderly, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God ! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." The astonishment of the disciples grew more and more, and they said mournfully one to another, "Who then can be saved ? "

They themselves were the living proof of this saying. At the call of the Master they had left everything, nets and boats, father, house, and field, custom-house and trade. Faith is the strongest thing of all. Nothing can hinder them whom God draws to himself. Peter, whose vivacity and frankness are always consistent, could not help saying, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee." And he added naïvely enough, and with some personal preoccupation, "What then will be given to us ? " Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Hitherto the Master had not spoken to his disciples about reward or glory, but by calling them to him, by withdrawing them from their life and surroundings, by forming them into one body with him, by penetrating them with his Spirit, he associated them with all the phases of his own destiny ; and they, in proportion as their love and strength increased, felt a more and more lively sense of the intimacy which identified their fate with that of their Master.

The reward is above life and beyond it. Jesus raised up the legitimate hopes of his apostles ; he told them that they will triumph with him ; but to adapt himself to their weakness and the part which illusion must play in the life of every creature, he left them in a state of uncertainty concerning the time when his day shall come, the day of universal regeneration, in which all things being subdued to his sway will

be renewed in his own glory, they will share in his government of the people of God, symbolized by the twelve tribes of Israel. While awaiting this far-off mysterious day, the fate of the faithful, even of the very least among those lowly ones who have abandoned all to follow Jesus, is not to be pitied. He said to them, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

The caravan had arrived in the valley of the Jordan, on the high road which leads from Galilee to Jerusalem by way of Jericho. They were now only two days' journey from the Holy City, and as they passed along the foot of Mount Saptaba, they could behold on the hilltop the fires which announced to the people the new moon and the Paschal Feast of the year 30.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE END OF THE JOURNEY: FROM JERICHO TO BETHANY

As they drew near to Jerusalem the disciples could not help feeling a vague anxiety. Their thoughts dwelt on the dangers which had lately threatened the Master there. There was an hour of solemn emotion, whose sadness remained profoundly fixed in the memory of one of the witnesses.

As Jesus walked in advance of the disciples, who followed in terrified and awe-struck silence, he took the Twelve apart, and said to them: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. He shall be delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes, and to the elders, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and to be scourged, and to be spit upon; and after they have scourged they shall crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again."

Jesus had already twice solemnly announced to his apostles his sufferings, and his death and resurrection. The first of these occasions was when they were journeying to Caesarea after the scene in which Peter had called him the Messiah, the Son of the living God; the second as they went down from Mount Tabor on their return to Capernaum. He foretold it now for the third time in that valley of the Jordan where the heavens had opened above his head, where the Spirit had manifested its presence visibly in him, where the voice of the Father had proclaimed him his well-beloved Son, where he himself had said, "Justice must be fulfilled in me."

This terrible mystery of love and expiation, this resurrection of the world by the death of the Messiah, was an enigma to the disciples; they turned away their minds from it in alarm. The more they believed in the holiness and the divinity of Jesus, the less could they admit the possibility of his defeat, his suffering, and his death: "They understood none of these things. This word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said."

These allusions to death, and resurrection on the third day, although they could understand them little better than those he had made to pain, scorn, suffering, and the cross, yet had the effect of recalling their mind to the glorious manifestation of the Kingdom ; and then, as will happen with weak and irresolute natures, dejection gave place to hope. They said to themselves that the Kingdom of God was about to come, and in their simple solicitude for their own interests, they grew intent on securing for themselves the best places. Their parents, especially their mothers, shared the ambition of their sons, and did not hesitate to present themselves before the Master to entreat his favour for them.

The caravans of Galilee, which were on their way to the feast, must have met Jesus and his followers in the neighbourhood of Jericho. This will explain the presence of the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, among the followers of Jesus, and her appearance in the scene which followed closely upon his announcement of his passion and his death.

Salome drew near to Jesus with James and John, and prostrated herself before him to make a request : " Master," said the two sons, with surprising confidence, " we desire that you should grant us what we ask of you." " What would ye ? " said Jesus. The mother answered : " Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Absorbed in the thoughts of his approaching death, and the agony by which he should enter into glory, Jesus recalled to his ambitious apostles the way of sorrow, by which alone the goal was to be won.

" Ye know not what ye ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized ? " The impetuous disciples answered without hesitation, " We can." " Ye shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of," answered Jesus, " and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized ye shall be baptized, but to sit on my right hand or on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared."

Hearing Jesus speak thus to James and John, the other ten were angry with the two brothers. Their ambition had aroused the jealousy and envy of their companions. Jesus called them to him. He was saddened by such petty rivalries, but his meekness made him calm ; the very faults which

dared to show themselves in his presence, only served him as subjects for apposite lessons, full of sublime instruction. "You know," he said to them, "that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be the greater among you let him be your minister, and he who would be the first among you shall be your servant."

As he approached the city a blind man sat by the wayside begging. Hearing the multitude passing, he asked what it meant. They said to him: "It is Jesus of Nazareth passing by." And he cried out, saying: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me." This homage to him, as the Messiah, coming from the mouth of such an unfortunate, touched the Master. Those that walked at the head of the procession wished to silence the blind man, but he cried all the more:

"Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought to him, and when he was come near, he said to him, What wilt thou that I do to thee? Lord, answered the blind man, that I may see. Receive thy sight, said Jesus to him, thy faith hath made thee whole." The blind man immediately recovered his sight, and followed his Saviour, glorifying God. The multitude was stirred by the miracle, and broke forth into praises. Jesus entered Jericho in triumph. He no longer forbade acclamations of the people; he no longer imposed silence on those whom he healed. It seemed as if he was preparing for his approaching entrance into Jerusalem.

Another incident which, in the simplicity of its narration, gives us a clear insight into the mind of Jesus, marked his passage through the city.

In the midst of the crowd that wished to draw near to the Prophet, there was a man named Zacchaeus. By his position as chief of the publicans he belonged to that class of sinners for whom the Pharisees professed the most pious contempt. He was rich, but no amount of riches could atone in those days for what the formalists called impiety. He was evidently not ignorant of the fact that Jesus had the name of being the friend of persons of his condition, and he ardently desired to see him and to know him. Being short of stature

he was unable to look over the heads of the multitude, and so he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree which stood near the road by which Jesus was to pass. Arrived at the place, the Master raised his eyes and perceived him "Zacchaeus," he said to him, calling him by his name, "make haste and come down, for to day I must abide in thy house." The chief of the tax-payers descended in haste, and received him with joy. The multitude, with whom the customs of the Pharisees were as binding laws, were scandalised. They cried, "Behold, he is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner."

The presence of Jesus under the roof of Zacchaeus seems to have suddenly transformed the publican. Standing before the Lord, he confessed the wickedness of his life, and expressed aloud his repentance and his penitence. "Lord," he said before them all, "the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore it fourfold."

Then Jesus said: "This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

A sentence in the third Gospel indicates that during the sojourn of Jesus in Jericho, the thought of the Kingdom of God, and of its near and brilliant manifestation in Jerusalem, agitated the minds as well of the multitude as of the disciples and immediate followers of Jesus. Calm and collected in the midst of the general agitation, he endeavoured, with wise prudence, to dispel the illusions of his followers. This wisdom inspired him with a new parable:

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And calling his ten servants, he delivered them ten pounds, and said to them, Trade till I come. But his citizens hated him, and they sent an embassage after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that he returned, having received the kingdom; and he commanded his servants to be called, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. And the first came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said to him, Well done thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power

over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin ; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man ; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and thou reapest that thou didst not sow. He saith to him, Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow. And why then didst thou not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required it with usury ? And he said to them that stood by, Take the pound from him, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. And they said to him, Lord he hath ten pounds. But I say to you, That to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound ; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him. But as for those my enemies, who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither, and kill them before me."

The man of noble birth is Jesus, the Son of God. The world is the far country to which he has come to found his Kingdom. His countrymen who hate him, and who do not desire that he shall reign over them, represent the Jews, his own fellow-citizens. The servants to whom he delivers the ten pounds are those who are called. The return to the country is the first coming of the Kingdom, a coming full of suffering, strife, and hostility. The second coming is in power. Jesus will judge with sovereign authority those who are called, and will make the enemies who have rejected his kingship feel the weight of his anger.

On the morrow Jesus again set forth on his journeyings. He signalized his departure from Jericho by a miracle, as he had signalized his entrance into it.

At the foot of the ascent known at present under the name of A'Kabet-Djaber, the ancient ascent of Adummin, two blind men were seated, asking alms. The news of the cure of the previous day having spread, the two blind men were impelled to perform the same act of faith which had succeeded so well with their companion in misfortune, and which was to awaken anew the compassion of the Prophet.

One of them was known as the son of Timaeus—Bartimaeus. Hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was passing, he began to cry out with that ardent confidence which misfortune often inspires, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" The multitude were going before, and Jesus followed. Those who were in front rebuked the blind man, that he should hold his peace, but he cried out the more, saying, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood and commanded the blind man to be brought to him. "Have confidence," they said to him, "rise, he calleth thee." The blind man, casting away his cloak, rose in haste and went to Jesus, who said to him, "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" "Lord, that I should see." "Receive thy sight," said the Master, "thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he followed after him, glorifying God.

On the following day they prepared him a supper in the house of Simon the leper, who was a friend, or perhaps a relation, of some of the followers of Jesus. Martha waited on them, and Lazarus, the same who had been brought back to life, was among the guests.

While they were at table, there came a woman with an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard. She drew near, broke the box, and poured it out upon his head, and anointed his feet with it, and wiped them with her hair. The ordinary ceremonies at the reception of a guest, the pouring of water upon the feet, the pouring of perfume upon the head, were not sufficient for her. Her ardent soul had a daring inspiration; she poured the precious liquor, like water, on the feet of the Saviour, and she wiped them with her hair. The whole house was filled with the scent of the perfume. The Evangelist does not mention the name of this woman, but there is no room for doubt, for the most minute details of the recital point to the sister of Martha and Lazarus, the penitent sinner, Mary Magdalene.

All actions which differ from the received formulas of society are liable to be misunderstood by base and vulgar natures, who judge everything from the point of view of what they call propriety or interest. A whole pound of the precious ointment had been lost, and some among the disciples thought this a waste to be regretted. Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, made himself the mouthpiece of their discontent,

and, disguising his ill-humour under a hypocritical semblance of charity, exclaimed, "Why was not this perfume sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"

He who spoke thus, and who was about to play so odious a part, is here mentioned by name for the first time in the Gospel narrative. He was the treasurer of the little community, who attended to the provisions, made the purchases, and arranged for the halts on their journeys. One of the Evangelists observes that he was already betraying the Master's trust, in the performance of these duties, by appropriating to himself the money intended for the maintenance of all: "he was a thief," he says bluntly. It must have been a base ambition that impelled him to follow Jesus, and to keep at his side. He hoped to see his dreams of avarice realized in the new Kingdom which was preparing, and which, after the manner of his contemporaries, he imagined to be radiant with worldly prosperity and earthly glory. Mercenary and covetous, crafty and coarse, his heart had remained impervious to the teachings and the influence of the Master; all the holiness of Jesus had not altered him. Such natures, unsubdued by the goodness of God, seemed predestined to treachery and crime.

Jesus took Mary's part: "Let her alone," he said, to Judas, "she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always. Verily, verily, I say to you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

Those who serve Jesus and honour him openly shall no more be forgotten than he in a world in which even the most dazzling of human achievements lose their glory and vanish into nothingness. They survive with the Master, partaking of his glory and his immortality. The perfume which Magdalene poured out so generously upon the feet of the Son of man, on the eve of his burial, will never evaporate. The prophecy of Jesus is come to pass; not only the house of Bethany, but all mankind is filled with its fragrance, and the faithful everywhere venerate and praise the woman whose heart was inspired with such tender gratitude.

The allusion of Jesus to his approaching death threw a veil of gloom over all the guests, and the hearts of the Master's

followers must have been oppressed with anguish. His presence at Bethany was already known in Jerusalem, and a great number of the Jews had hastened, at the news, to see him and Lazarus. The chiefs of the Sanhedrin had given it to be understood that Lazarus himself would not escape, they were exasperated by this living miracle. Reasons of state, urged by the high priest, Caiaphas, counselled violence ; they were more and more resolved upon violence. Everything presaged a catastrophe. This time, far from shunning it, Jesus went to meet it.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

THE day after the Sabbath, that is, the first day of this great week in which Jesus was to die (the 10th of Nisan, or, in our calendar, the 2nd of April in the year 30), was, for him, a day of triumph. He departed from Bethany with his disciples, and set out for Jerusalem.

Jesus followed, with his disciples, the road which ran along the eastern side of the Mount of Olives. On approaching Bethphage he halted, and, pointing it out to two of his disciples, said to them: "Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, whereon never man sat: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." All this came to pass as Jesus had said. The ass and the colt were standing, tied outside the gate, between two roads. The disciples unbound them and led them to the Master; then, spreading their garments on the colt, they made him sit thereon.

As soon as it was told the people that he was going towards Jerusalem, they ran out to meet him. Enthusiasm seized the disciples and the multitude; they spread their cloaks along the road beneath the feet of the Prophet, cut down branches and strewed the ground with them, while others held branches of palm in their hands, and came towards him, crying: "Hosannah in the highest!" Those who led the way and those who followed caught up from one another the prolonged acclamations. The popular mind was at length kindled into flame; it did justice to the man who came to save all. If it has its hours of error and madness, it has also its burning sincerity and its flashes of truth. Jesus, who till now had rejected all ovations throughout his public life, shunning and fearing the excitable nature of the multitude, accepted the triumph which was offered him. He welcomed with delight

their cries as they proclaimed his title of Messiah, and heralded the coming of his Kingdom. It is necessary that truth should be hailed, and that in glorifying it man should honour himself.

This triumph of a day was in the designs of God. The Prophets had announced and described it even in its most characteristic details. One of them said six centuries before : " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off : and he shall speak peace unto the heathen : and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea."[1]

The popular enthusiasm increased, and, as the procession advanced, the disciples, in the fulness of their joy, gave thanks to God, mingling with the acclamations of the multitude the narration of the marvels that they had seen in following their Master. The irritation of the Pharisees was aggravated. In their spite and anger they were heard to say : " Ye behold that our threats are of no avail ; all the world follows him." This people, whom they inwardly disdained, and for whom they had only words of contempt, they nevertheless loved to have at their feet like a gang of slaves ; and seeing this mass of men subdued and passive, they believed themselves all-powerful ; but when a personality greater than themselves draws the people away from them, and frees them while it draws, they feel themselves seized with a paroxysm of that hatred which clings to declining power. They stop at nothing in their endeavours to regain their prestige and maintain their authority ; crime itself becomes sacred in their eyes.

When Jesus had reached the spur of the Mount of Olives, from the point where the road turns downwards into the valley of the Cedron, he beheld Jerusalem at his feet. The sight filled him with sadness : he wept. He sobbed over the city. " If thou hadst known," he exclaimed, " even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench

[1] Zechariah ix. 9-10.

about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

This is one of the few occasions on which Jesus wept; his tears in the midst of his peaceful triumph had in them something profoundly melancholy. This joy of a day which the Father grants him before the last struggle and the last agony is forgotten by him in order to think upon his people, and upon his thankless and guilty city, and the terrible destiny which it is bringing upon itself.

The unutterable anguish of Jesus is not for his own fate, to that he is resigned; it is the fate of his people and of the city which is on the point of demanding his execution; and this blindness will let loose upon Israel nameless calamities. The future was before his eyes; he saw Jerusalem besieged, invested, laid waste with fire and sword, her children slaughtered, and her houses, her monuments, her palaces, her Temple itself levelled with the ground.

Full of such thoughts, the anguish of which contrasted with the hosannahs of the multitude and the clamorous joy of his disciples, Jesus, in the midst of his royal procession, made his entry into the city. Jerusalem was in an uproar. On seeing this multitude, and hearing their acclamations, the people asked who it was that had come, and all those who accompanied him cried out triumphantly, "It is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, in Galilee." This popular ovation remained as it began: simple, peaceful, religious. There was nothing of worldly pomp, no military show, no cry of revolt against the ruling powers; only branches of trees thrown upon the road, garments spread beneath the feet of Jesus, and the solemn chant, the great Messianic Hallel, as it was taught to the children that they might be ready to welcome the Son of David on the day of his coming. Again, the animal chosen by the triumphant Saviour enhanced the humble, simple character of his triumph. He disdained the steed of conquerors; he who will not reign save by infinite compassion, advances, mounted upon an ass's colt. The multitude which precedes and follows him, is itself composed for the most part of Galilaeans, those provincials so despised at Jerusalem.

The Romans did not give a thought to this gentle, peaceful king who did not threaten their power, and the proud Sadducees, as the procession passed them, may have looked up at it for a moment with a glance of disdain. It moved straight onwards to the Temple.

On entering the Temple, Jesus went to pray before that blood-stained altar, whose fire was about to be extinguished for ever, and whose place he was himself to fill. The oblation of himself to his Father was for all time; on this day it was renewed in silence. The agonizing mystery of his destiny was now begun, but he kept the thought of it deep down in his soul, while the disciples, incapable as ever of comprehending him, in spite of his repeated declarations, gave themselves up to the hopes of a near and splendid triumph.

After having prayed, "he looked round about upon everything," says the Evangelist; the Master's eye examined every detail. He could see all the noisy preparations for the feast, the herds of oxen and bulls, heifers, sheep, and lambs, huddled together in the Court of the Gentiles, as in a slaughter-house; and surely it was with sad eyes that he beheld merchandise thus dishonouring the house of prayer.

It was now evening. He went out with the Twelve and returned to Bethany, where the hospitality of his friends was ever ready to welcome him. Of these last hours of these last nights we know nothing. All the details of the life of the Master in this week of anguish have disappeared before the events which prepared and hastened the catastrophe.

On the next day, accompanied by the Twelve, he returned to Jerusalem. This return was marked by a mysterious episode, which impressed the imagination of the apostles. As he went forth from the village Jesus was an hungered. The whole district of Bethany is covered with vines and fruit-trees, and he perceived at a distance, on the roadside, a fig-tree in full leaf; it was not yet the season for figs, so he said to it: "Let no man hereafter eat of thy fruit." The expression was remembered by the astonished disciples. Jesus, however, said nothing further, but pursued his way.

Coming to Jerusalem he entered into the Temple, but this time with the air of a master, as on the day on which he made his first appearance. The sight of the same sacrilegious profanations revolted him, and his righteous anger

broke forth. He began by casting out of the Court of the Gentiles buyers and sellers ; he threw down the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves ; he would suffer no man to carry any vessel through the Temple. He said to them in his indignation : " It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Those who, on the evening before, had proclaimed him Son of David and King, as well as those who had shuddered at these acclamations, could now tell in what sense he understood his royalty. No act symbolises with such expressive power the eternal part which Jesus played upon this earth, where he came to establish his Kingdom. His angry zeal throws a halo round his head ; no man has been so jealous as he for the purity and holiness of his Father's dwelling.

It was an extraordinary and terrifying power which broke forth in him when he let loose the reins of his fiery zeal, and the gentleness and sweetness of the Saviour yielded to the righteous wrath of the judge. But the very moment after he had poured out the vials of his anger upon the guilty and unworthy, his frowns relaxed at the sight of the sick and infirm who gathered round him. The lowly did not fear, they were drawn towards him, at the sight of him they felt hope spring up in the midst of all their wretchedness ; the blind and the halt approached and he healed them.

The people, wonder-stricken by his miracles and his teaching, testified their sympathy for the Prophet in the sight of all men ; the ardour and enthusiasm of the day before was not belied. Children repeated in the Temple the acclamations which had resounded in the descent of the Mount of Olives at the entry of Jesus. They cried, " Hosannah to the Son of David ! " Such cries soon provoked offence ; the authorities of the Temple, the scribes, and all the other opponents of Jesus, came to him and said indignantly : " Hearest thou what these say ? " His calmness, and the pertinence of his answer, disconcerted and put them to silence : " Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ? "

The sovereign and authoritative attitude of Jesus in the Temple, the favour of the people, and the welcome which they gave to his teaching, the growing enthusiasm produced by his miracles, all contributed to stir up the spite and jealous

hatred of his enemies. Their mind was made up; Jesus must die. The High Council was resolved to condemn him. The most influential persons among the priestly class, and among the doctors, busied themselves to find a practical means of putting him to death. But an obstacle stood in their way—the people. They feared a revolution. They wished that all should pass off quietly; they were afraid of Jesus. Thus at this critical moment he had no other support but the people.

At sunset he withdrew and betook himself again with his followers to Bethany. Next day he returned at the first hour, accompanied by his disciples, by the same road which he had traversed on the previous day. On their way the disciples saw the accursed fig-tree withered to its roots. "Master," said Peter, "the fig-tree which thou hast cursed hath withered away."

This is a brilliant figure, the hidden meaning of which has been laid bare by universal tradition.[1] The real fig-tree is the chosen people, planted by God in a chosen land. At the appointed time, Jesus, the Messenger of the Father, has come to urge upon them penitence and faith. These are the fruits for which he hungered, the fruits which he longed with such burning eagerness to gather. God strikes with death whatsoever of his favoured creatures has received his bounty and his care, his waiting and his love, in vain. All history is strewn with the remains of those works of man which the living Spirit of God has not builded, lying shattered under the blows of time. All history is cumbered with the dead bodies of those sterile beings who, though born of the breath of God, have not responded to his call, but have falsified his hopes for them. The very type of their decay is found in Judaism, withered to the roots. Incapable of producing any fruits of religion, it yet remains standing, showing even in its barrenness the terrible malediction with which Jesus has weighed it down. The sight of the fig-tree accursed, and withered by the curse, seems to have roused in the minds of the disciples no other idea than that of the terrible power of the Master. But Jesus only sought to inspire them with the more perfect confidence, saying: "Put your trust in God." Then and then only will the Spirit of God inspire us with a good desire, the desire which is always listened to by God,

[1] Cf. Origen *Tract*, 16 and 18; St. Jerome in Matthew, *ad. h. l.*

for it comes from him. "Therefore I say unto you," said Jesus, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Such a prayer presupposes perfect charity and a good and upright heart: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." The infinite mercy of the Heavenly Father is the recompense of our mercy; he has pity on those who themselves have pity; he loves those who themselves love; he hears them and grants their prayers. All these teachings, which sum up his religion, Jesus has reproduced a thousand times. As his death approaches they become more and more pathetic and forcible. He recalled them once again that day, on the road from Bethany to Jerusalem, as he returned to face the dangers which threatened him, commanded by his Father's will to advance against them. This day, the 12th of Nisan, is the last which he is destined to pass in the Temple. The multitude have preceded him to it, and there too his enemies awaited him.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE LAST CONFLICTS IN THE TEMPLE

On the morning of the 12th of Nisan, Jesus, having entered the Temple, walked under the porches teaching and preaching to the multitude. A deputation of priests, scribes, and elders approached, and demanded from him an account of the high commission which he claimed to bear. "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" It was the very purpose of Jesus which was thus suspected. The emissaries are under no mistake about the pretensions of the Prophet; since his coming he has not ceased to assert them. For three days he has suffered himself to be acclaimed as the Messiah by a crowd of partisans; he has entered the Temple as a reformer and he discusses and teaches there as a Master. By what right does he so act? He has received no commission from authority; he is therefore an usurper, an agitator, a seducer, an innovator. In thus demanding his authorization the enemies of Jesus did not seek to be enlightened; all they wanted from him was some expression which might serve as a basis for the intended accusation, and so cause his ruin. They evidently expected a formal avowal of his Messianic mission and his divine Sonship. Such a declaration would be nothing new in the mouth of Jesus; his discourses, ever since the Feast of Tabernacles, at Jerusalem, and in the open Temple, had been one long commentary and demonstration of its truth. The members of the Sanhedrin must have heard them as well as the multitude; they must therefore have known on what grounds Jesus based his mission, and in what sense he understood the Messianic Kingdom and his title of Messiah. Jesus refused to reply. What good was it to tell the truth to such traitors? They deserve rather to be confounded and to have their treachery unmasked.

"I also will ask you one thing," said he to his questioners, before the multitude, "which if ye tell me, I in like wise

will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it ? from heaven, or of men ? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven ; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him ? But if we shall say, Of men ; we fear the people ; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

In confessing their ignorance on the subject of the divine mission of John, the representatives of power and sacred learning in Israel, the princes of the priests and scribes, condemned themselves. The coming of a prophet, a messenger of God, such as John, the most extraordinary religious event of the age and one clearly foreshown by the prophets, had come to pass, and yet, by their own acknowledgment, the Sanhedrin did not understand it. They did not know if it was from heaven or from men that the Baptist's inspiration came. The memory of John was still vividly present to the minds of the people ; Jesus took him for his example, and in affirming the divine authority of the prophet he tacitly affirmed his own. It was not the high priests and the doctors that had made John in the womb of his mother, that had clothed him in the desert, that had given him the power to baptize, to cry " Repent," and to publish the coming of the Kingdom : it was the Spirit of God, and so his authority was not counter to the Spirit of God. They ought then to have believed on John, to have heard him, and followed him gladly. They had betrayed their trust. Jesus severely rebuked them for it.

" But what think ye ? A certain man had two sons ; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not : but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir : and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father ? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not : but the publicans and harlots believed him : and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

This bold exposure of unbelief and the crime of the ruling Powers, both in the case of the Prophets and of the Son of God himself, these prophetic menaces of divine wrath, the approaching reprobation of the faithless hierarchy, the crushing of all the enemies of Jesus, all these severe truths exasperated the princes of the priests and scribes beyond all bounds. Their anger broke forth, and they would have arrested Jesus on the spot. But the people defended him, and the rulers trembled before the people. They withdrew, therefore, to meditate fresh plots. It was their object at all hazards to compromise Jesus in the eyes of the Roman authority. If they could once make him pass for a revolutionist and a dangerous agitator, the Governor, who never delayed to strike down everyone that menaced the Imperial privileges, would have a weapon ready to his hand. The intrigue was cleverly and rapidly planned. The leaders dissembled, and appealing to their disciples, chose certain Pharisees and certain Herodians. The former were the warm partizans of national independence ; the second, rallying to the house of Herod in spite of its foreign origin, had, like it, resigned themselves to the Caesarian domination. These two parties, generally at bitter feud, united to oppose and destroy Jesus.

The emissaries, after concerting their plans together, came to Jesus. With affected scruples of conscience and a pretence of wanting no more than justice, they began by flattering him whom they hoped to surprise. " Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man : for thou regardest not the person of men." After this hypocritical eulogy, the object of which was to prevent Jesus from evading the necessity for a reply to their question, they added : " Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not ? "

No more insidious question could have been put to Jesus than this of the Roman impost. It was one that excited violent feelings in the multitude, involving as it did, the question of the national independence. It was under colour of the impost that agitators stirred public opinion into passion, and provoked rebellions. The people paid it only under protest ; they yielded to superior force, waiting for their Messiah to break the yoke. The Galilaeans above all had the reputation of fierce upholders of independence. These ques-

tioners, who would have wrung a reply from Jesus touching the impost, must have been mentally convinced that he was an absolute opponent of foreign rule ; they did not doubt but that in his character as a Galilaean, with his Messianic pretensions and his popular sympathies, he would condemn the tribute which was the symbol of his country's servitude.

This was the signal which they waited for ; but the Master saw through their device, and unmasked them with a word : "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription ? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

A state can have nothing to fear from the Church of Jesus. It will receive from her only benefits, and it will have no surer guarantee of progress and tranquillity than his words, who said : "Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

The villainy of the emissaries sent to compromise Jesus has become a laughing-stock. These pretended righteous men cannot refuse to admire his wisdom ; they depart in silence, confounded and wonder-stricken. But every party seems now to be in arms against Jesus ; the questions are asked more and more often, and pressed more and more closely. The word has been passed round to provoke him and to lay snares for him. After the princes of the priesthood and of those learned in the Law, who demanded of him whence his authority was derived, after the Pharisees and the Herodians, who hoped to ruin him by questioning the legality of the impost, he had to reckon with the sarcastic and sceptical Sadducees. These were the positivists of the time. The idea of another world seemed to them an absurdity ; they mocked at the devout Pharisees for sacrificing the present to their dreams of a future life. They thought little of the prophets, accepting only the Law, properly so called, in which however, they saw nothing more than a wise government of worldly interests and affairs. They anticipated certain modern critics in pretending that there was nothing in the Law to assert the immortality of the soul. They denied the resurrection. With their limited and short-sighted views they found only absurdity in doctrines alien to their legal wisdom.

They were very arrogant, and ready adepts at sarcasm. Thinking to embarrass Jesus, as though he were a simple Pharisee, they proposed to him one of the problems which formed the theme of their scholastic disputes, and no doubt one which had often reduced their adversaries to silence.

"Master," they said to him, "Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her."

Jesus assumed a haughty tone with these casuists; the subtleties of the schools were alien to him. His answer is the answer of the Spirit, which knows and sees as well the mysteries of eternity as the realities of time. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

The wisdom of Jesus had a new triumph; the delighted audience applauded him, while certain scribes, being well pleased to see the Sadducees refuted and confounded, said to him: "Master, thou hast said well." One doctor even, who had heard the question of the Sadducees and the reply of Jesus, approached and asked him which was the first of the commandments. The Master answered: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said unto him: "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

We find here the pure expression of Judaism, such as was taught by the sage Hillel. Love is better than all burnt offerings. This was the great doctrine which the prophets taught, and which the formalists neglected. But this is not all that makes a righteous man, something yet remains to be done by him who loves God and his neighbour. Jesus, approving the wisdom of the scribe, tells him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." True doctrine and true virtue are only a preparation for the Kingdom, but they do not open its gates; faith alone can let us enter there. It is only by believing on Jesus that the Spirit of God is given to us, and that we can be regenerated by this Spirit to share in the very life of God. Before this second birth, we are only the servants of God; after it we become his children. Before it, we loved God only with all the powers of our being; after it we love him with the same powers, but elevated and made divine by his Spirit.

Thus, in the midst of the incessant struggles which assailed Jesus on the last day of his ministry, under the porches of the Temple, he appeared ever more and more invulnerable and triumphant. He escaped every ambush; those who thought to destroy him only increased his greatness. The wiles of his enemies only succeeded in bringing out his power; he enlightened and rallied to himself all those who, after the example of that simple-hearted doctor, came to seek him in peace and in sincerity.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE FINAL DENUNCIATIONS OF THE PHARISEES

The emissaries of the Sanhedrin, the doctors of the various sects and schools, grew weary of questioning and persecuting Jesus. They were afraid of him: his invincible wisdom had confounded and inspired terror in them. It seems, as if, by means of it, he had captured the Temple from its unworthy masters. He really ruled there in their midst, amid the applause of the people who considered him as Messiah; and, indeed, he exercised the divine Messianic function. But he was not ignorant of the fact that his life was sought after; he had clearly said so in the parable of the husbandmen, and had even pointed to the conspirators. He knew that he would not be forgiven for having called himself the Son of God, and that this title, the only one which could express his Messianic office, would be imputed to him as blasphemy. He desired to bring his adversaries to recognize his right so to name himself on the authority of the Scriptures. He gathered the Pharisees together, and put to them this question: "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?" The Scribes answered him: "The Son of David."

No title was more widely known throughout the country, in tradition, and in the schools. But what is meant by the Son of David? What is his nature, his dignity, and his function? This is the point at which the popular imagination went astray, and regarding which the wisdom of the doctors was mistaken and at fault. Among the glories attributed to this personage, there is one which contains and sums them all: that is, his divinity. This it is which men failed to recognize, and which Jesus applied all his public life to making manifest. Even on that day, as he was on the eve of quitting the Temple to die, he endeavoured to point it out to the Scribes, taking for his text the most popular of the Messianic psalms, that in which the prophet distinctly stated the divinity of Christ, his equality in power with God, his final triumph over all his enemies, and his eternal priesthood.

Taking up this title of Son of David, which expressed only his human descent, Jesus does not refuse it, as certain exegetical writers have pretended, indeed, he always accepted it ; but by vindicating it this day before them, he set himself to suggest to them the mystery of his divinity. " If Christ, then, is the Son of David," he said, " how does David in the Holy Spirit call him Lord ? " And he proceeded to recite the psalm : " The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

The soberness of the Gospel narrative scarcely admits a full presentation of the splendour of this scene, the last in which Jesus encountered his enemies. It is, nevertheless, one of the most touching, for in thus declaring his true nature he was signing his own death-warrant. But death was nothing to him. It was simply the condition of his victory. He was full well aware that his sacrifice was about to purchase for him an eternal triumph. He must have spoken to the Jews with striking authority as he recalled to them the words of Jehovah to the Messiah : " Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool." It was then that Jesus turned to his disciples. The people, at least, in their simplicity heard him with rapture. He spoke as a Judge, publicly condemning, stigmatizing, branding, and overwhelming with denunciation the Scribes and Pharisees, and all the representatives of the Law, and the learning of the official religion.

" Beware of them," he said, " they shall receive the greater damnation." " They sit in Moses' seat : all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do but do not ye after their works : for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders ; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men : they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi : for one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth : for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters : for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your

servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

We here see the eternal and inexorable justice of God thundering forth by the mouth of Jesus, his faithful instrument, against the heads of the Jewish nation, the guides of its public opinion, and indeed all those who throughout the ages carry on their deadly work. The crimes of these wicked men in high places have been such as to silence mercy, and provoke the divine vengeance.

Even while Jesus was overwhelming them with his divine and holy indignation, he knew that they were plotting his destruction, and signing his death-warrant ; and the sight wrung from him the last and still more terrible malediction : " Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." Here is the fulminating wrath of a judge, of the divine Judge himself, who takes in at a single glance the whole mountain of his people's guilt before their God. " Ye serpents," he cried, " ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes : and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

The words of Jesus are no empty formula ; they are stamped with the might of God ; when he blesses, he opens the fountain of his infinite goodness ; when he curses he unchains all the powers of the abyss. With these oft-repeated cries of " Woe ! woe ! " he heaps the anger of God on the devoted heads of its victims. " Verily I say unto you," he added, " all these things shall come upon this generation."

The thought of the terrible retribution which the crime of his death was about to bring upon his people, and upon the

ungrateful city, filled him all at once with a mighty grief: he apostrophised Jerusalem in a poignant phrase which had been once already wrung from him at the sight of its obstinate infidelity. "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And, pointing to the Temple, he added: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you ,Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

This was his last appeal. He was not heeded. The Temple was never to behold again him who alone could fill it and secure its eternity; it would fall like an empty house abandoned by its inhabitants. Whatsoever casts out God is destined to inevitable destruction.

At the end of these discourses, so full of vehemence and pathos, Jesus seated himself apart, in the Court of Israel, near the hall of the Treasury, facing the collecting-boxes placed to receive the offerings. He looked upon the crowd which thronged about him to throw in their money. The rich, of whom there were many, deposited large sums, and the people marvelled at them. A poor widow came up, and she threw in two mites which made scarcely half a farthing. And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said unto them: "Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

We must here narrate a characteristic incident which suggested the last words spoken by Jesus in the Temple. Among those who had come up to Jerusalem to keep the festival were certain Greeks, and these men came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida in Galilee, and entreated him, saying, "Master, we would see Jesus."

The Passover brought to Jerusalem, not only pious Jews from Palestine and from all parts of the world, but the Gentiles, who had become converts to Judaism in their own country. They were known as the proselytes of the Gate. There were

many of them in Syria and Decapolis, and throughout the provinces of the ancient empire of Alexander. At the great festivals they came to the Jewish capital and offered their sacrifices in the Temple. The Court of the Gentiles was open to them. Evidently these Hellenes belonged to the class of the proselytes of the Gate, and they appear to have known Philip, which is a sign that they must have dwelt in some city of Decapolis near Bethsaida. Besides, the triumphal entry of the Prophet into Jerusalem, his expulsion of the buyers and sellers from the Temple, his popular preaching which delighted the crowd, his repeated miracles, his victorious answers to the insidious questions of the doctors, his struggle, so powerfully maintained against the Sanhedrin and the rulers all explain and justify their ardent desire to see Jesus. It is no mere curiosity which impels them, it is an attraction felt deeply within the conscience. Their request, in its touching discreetness, betrays their great respect.

The disciple understands the gravity of the course which he is asked to take; he may have remembered the word of his Master: "I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He dares not take upon himself to convey to Jesus the prayer of these Gentiles. He confers with Andrew, and it is this last disciple, whose resolute character we have already noticed, who decides Philip to bring the message to Jesus. In spite of the silence of the Evangelist, we may suppose that Jesus gratified the desire of the Gentiles; for by no conscience was he invoked in vain. These Greeks then eagerly approached, gazed upon and listened to him. They were the witnesses, as they were the occasion of one of the most poignant outbursts of the soul of Jesus.

Seeing himself sought after by these Gentiles at the very moment when the Jews were rejecting him, he was overcome by a divine emotion. His whole destiny lay plain before him, austere and glorious; he saw with the inward eye his future death and triumph, and in his death the cause of his triumph. If it is willed by his Father that the blind and unbelieving nation shall only reply to his appeal by crucifying him, it is also willed that his death shall conquer sin and draw all men unto him. "The Prince of this world" is to nail him to the cross; but he is preparing unawares the throne to the foot of which the Gentiles will flock in multitudes to adore their Saviour.

This prophetic vision troubles and yet exalts, overwhelms and yet consoles him. In spite of the conflicting emotions which agitate him inwardly, his words carry with them and in them both power and peace. Jesus seeks to prepare his hearers against the shock of his approaching death. "The hour is come," he said, "that the Son of man should be glorified." This glory is not only the new and transfigured life which he will enjoy in his Kingdom at the right hand of his Father, set free for ever from infirmity and death: it is also the triumph which he is to win over the Gentile world and all mankind.

The thought of his approaching, nay, his imminent death, and of the terrible struggles which were preparing for him, drew from Jesus a cry of agony. Although in perfect agreement with the will of his Father, he felt more keenly than we should an instinctive repugnance to suffering and death, and he laid bare to the sight of his disciples this terrible inward conflict. "Now is my soul troubled," he exclaimed, "and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Such is the expression of a will which silences nature and loses itself in God. Jesus devotes himself to death for the glory of his Father. His agony seems to have already begun. This scene is the prelude to it. The occasion was a solemn one; it must have deeply moved those who witnessed it. But a wondrous manifestation came to magnify and exalt him who thus abased himself before God by sacrificing himself to his glory, and before men, by suffering them to see the anguish which tortured him. There came a voice from heaven, the same which had sounded at the Baptism and in the Transfiguration: "I have already glorified my name, and will glorify it again."

The voice from heaven was heard by all, but not understood by all. The multitude were amazed, and said, "It thundered"; others said, "An angel spake to him." "This voice," said Jesus, "came not because of me, but for your sakes."

"Now is the judgment of this world," he added, "now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Never until this hour had Jesus spoken of his death with so firm an accent, or showed more clearly how much that was glorious lay hidden beneath its shame.

While Jesus was speaking, the multitude had gathered round him. They had heard him speak of the death of the Son of man and of his lifting up upon the cross, and many of them were offended. The idea of a dying Messiah, of a Messiah condemned to the felon's torture, was revolting to a nation accustomed to the idea of a conquering Messiah, the founder of an eternal Kingdom built upon the ruins of Pagan empires. At the word "crucifixion," the multitude cried out: "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" In this popular objection we see how great was the stumbling-block which is to come between the multitude and Jesus. A conquered and crucified Messiah cannot be the true Messiah.

Jesus does not reply to the question. The time for discussing and teaching was gone by. He withdrew with his disciples, making a last appeal to the people in language such as no human lips have spoken: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE COMING RUIN OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE. THE END OF THE WORLD

On leaving the Temple, to which he was never more to return, Jesus, more than ever repudiated by the chiefs of the nation, went out, no doubt, by the Gate of Susa, which opened on to the valley of the Cedron, and retired with his followers to Bethany.

All that they had seen and heard during these last days, the struggles which they had witnessed and which they had shared, the opposition and the hatred which had dogged the steps of the Master, seems to have fortified them. They feel still more the closeness of the tie which binds them to his destiny. They are resolved to follow him; they feel what every man feels who has the least generosity and courage; they become the more ardently attached to their leader the more they see him despised and insulted.

Jesus and his disciples had now crossed the valley of the Cedron, and were climbing the slope of the Mount of Olives. When they were half-way up the hill, Jesus sat down, his face turned towards the Temple. It was evening, and the sun was setting. The disciples were still under the influence of the words of their Master: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another." They drew near to him, and four of them privately said to him: "Master, tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy manifestation, and of the consummation of the world?" The air of mystery with which this question was put is easy to explain. There was danger of death in speaking of the destruction of the Holy Place. Scribes and members of the Sanhedrin refused to admit that the destruction of their Temple could be even thought of without blasphemy. Stephen the deacon, some years later, was to atone with his life-blood for the heroic courage with which, recalling the words of Jesus, he had publicly announced its end. The question put by the apostles

will bear a closer scrutiny, for it disclosed the agitating thoughts in which they were wrapped at this tragic hour ; it betrayed the illusions with which the followers of Jesus buoyed themselves up, and gave the key to his prophetic reply.

"Beware!" This was the first word of Jesus in answer to his disciples. "Take heed that ye be not deceived : for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and the time draweth near : go ye not therefore after them."

There is only one Master, one Messiah, one Liberator, one Saviour. This is a truth which Jesus was never weary of impressing upon the minds of his disciples ; and this Master, this Messiah, this Liberator, this Saviour, is himself. Christ having come, there is no longer any Master to be looked for, any Saviour to be expected, any new revealer. Those who should listen to false teachers and false Messiahs would be deceived. In giving Jesus, heaven has given us everything, for it has given us itself. Jesus requires fidelity from his disciples. If they will remain united to him they will have the strength to conquer all things, and the wisdom to understand all things ; this is the supreme duty. Nothing more urgently needed recalling to their minds, for, in that Messianic age, false Messiahs and pretenders to inspiration, such as was Simon the Magician, were about to multiply within the Jewish nation, which, having refused to receive the true Saviour, was destined to be led astray by false prophets, and to become a prey to all the vagaries of error.

The Master then points out to his disciples the phenomena which are about to agitate human society, and the whole world : "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars : see that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

All these words were verified to the letter : they seem to be history, while in reality they are prophecy. We see Jerusalem attacked by the Ascalonites, the Ptolemys, the Damascenes, the Syrians, and every other neighbouring nation. We hear the tread of the Roman legions in the last

years of Titus, and in the reigns of Caligula and Nero, and we anticipate the sanguinary revolts which shook the throne of the Caesars. In those very times, the East was decimated, under Claudius, by a terrible famine which raged in Judaea,[1] and earthquakes destroyed Laodicea and Hieropolis. The sight of such disasters always strikes the popular imagination. Terrified and distracted, men suppose that the world is going to wreck. The terror of God overwhelms them.

Jesus recommends calm to his disciples. These disturbances, these tumultuous upheavals of empires and kingdoms, these wars without end, are the law of a world in which the spirit of hatred and intrigue, pride and pleasure, bears sway; these things must have their course. His followers are not to be astonished or terrified as the Gentiles. And just as the nations are agitated, so the heavens and the earth are in commotion; physical conflicts are abundant; the forces which are at work in these commotions battle against each other, sometimes surprising and overwhelming man himself, and by certain appearances, which argue the instability of their equilibrium, betraying their pantings after a better state. The believer must remain firm in this fragile dwelling. And yet what a terrible fate is his! Jesus is about to paint it in imperishable characters.

"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. Settle it therefore in your own hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

And, besides political persecution, shall come family persecution and estrangement; "and the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: and then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And

[1] Acts xi. 28; cf. *Antiq. Jud.*, xx. 3.

because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved."

All these things the Acts of the Apostles show us to have been accomplished, just as they were foretold by Jesus. The first disciples were familiar with every persecution that authority could devise; they were dragged, like Stephen and James, before the synagogues, and were put to death and stoned in the cause of Jesus; they were brought before kings and governors, like Paul at Caesarea and at Rome. The Spirit of their Master endowed them with irresistible eloquence and wisdom. They were the object of universal hatred. But they possessed their souls in patience; they persevered to the end, although many fell away. They made manifest, by their constancy and their strength, the glory of the Gospel. They waited for God's good time, neither allowing themselves to be seduced by false prophets, nor by false signs, nor by the inspirations of a misleading patriotism, nor by persecutions.

After having forewarned his disciples by showing them the surroundings among which they would have to live, the fate which awaits them, and the virtues which he requires of them, Jesus gives them the sign which they asked of him concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, and the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth, let him understand: then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

The sign indicated is, according to St. Luke, the hostile army invading Jerusalem. The two first Evangelists call it, in the words of Daniel, "the abomination of desolation," an expression obviously referring to the Roman standards, decked with the images of the gods and of Caesar, planted on the sacred territory surrounding the Holy City. In the year 65, a quarter of a century after Jesus had spoken, the Roman armies made their appearance. First the Governor Florus sent his cohorts to punish the turbulent people of Jerusalem; some months later the legions returned under the command of Cestius, prefect of Syria; and, finally, in the spring of 70 Titus invested the Holy City.

"Then," said Jesus, "let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

And, his thoughts returning to the false Christs, Jesus added, with supreme emphasis: "And then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ: or, lo, he is there; believe him not: for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things."

It is beyond our narrow powers even to guess what will become of the world in this second birth, of which Jesus regards himself as the principle and cause; what will be the astronomical conditions of the planetary system; what will be the nature of this dwelling prepared by Christ for his elect, this city every part of which will be brought into harmony. All that man sees around him is subject to the empire of death; the laws which govern this empire are, until broken by the Son of man, an impassable barrier which arrests our timid and cowardly thoughts. What Jesus promises us will be fulfilled at his coming, it is quite enough for us to know that the reunion of all his elect from the four winds of heaven will take place in him and with him; and this hope will have

the strength to sustain his disciples throughout the duration of the ages. His revelations are addressed to all. The solemn prophecy which he uttered on this small Mount of Olives, overlooking the valley of Jehoshaphat, with his eyes fixed on the Temple destined to destruction, is a warning given to all ages.

"When these things shall come to pass fear not, rather lift up your head, your redemption is at hand." The imagination and the heart of man dare not attempt to forecast[1] how the return of Christ shall be visibly accomplished; how he who bears the winnowing-fan in his hand shall make the great separation of his elect from out the whole world and all the tribes of the earth, bowing before his judgment; what share the spirits shall have in the final work; in what new forms our new life shall be clothed, that life triumphant over time and place, corruption and death, transfigured by the life of Jesus itself, which shall penetrate all his elect. Man's boldest powers are incapable of fathoming the secrets of infinite love. Our wisdom is but folly, and what we call bold flights of genius are but mere timidity in the presence of the eternal designs.

Jesus insisted once again on the duty of vigilance, and of vigilance full of hope. "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." And in connection with the ruin of Jerusalem he added: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." But what will be the day and what the hour of the end of the world? "No man knoweth, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

This is not included among those divine secrets which the Son of man had received from the Father to transmit to mankind, and it is in this sense that he does not know it. This is the great and terrible secret. It is the threat ever hanging over the earth. The world may end by a single stroke to-morrow, or in a century, or in ten centuries. The time is short; for God and for those who judge by the light of God,

[1] I. Cor. ii. 9.

a thousand years are as one day. The duty of the faithful man is to live as if the world were to end to-day.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

And once more did he exhort them to vigilance, but yet to an active vigilance, saying:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest

there be not enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

The Master indicates, under this symbol, the virtues which are the brightness of the soul, and without which our faith is as a lamp without oil. There is only one time and one hour of admission to the feast : when once the hour is past, the door is closed ; it is too late. To those who come to knock for admission it opens no more. " I know you not," replies the Bridegroom. Now, this is our earthly life ; those who have not made, during life, the mysterious provision will be rejected. This is an awful thing. Virtue cannot be borrowed ; it is a treasure personal and inalienable, and it is hardly enough for those who have gathered it. " Watch ye, watch ye," repeated Jesus ; " have your lamp lighted, for ye know neither the day nor the hour."

Thus does Jesus on the eve of his death, seated before the Temple and the city, and surrounded by his disciples, exert himself to enlighten and to strengthen them, unfolding to them his great work, and telling them their duties. He speaks of the time when he shall be no more. He tells them what is to come to pass. His thoughts travel from the present to the future ; from the near future to the extreme future ; from the land of Judaea to all mankind ; from the transitory world to the eternity in which, all things being consummated, he will reign, judge, and choose his elect. His declaration concerning this last solemn judgment is a revelation addressed to all believers. Even at the very moment when men were preparing to pass judgment on him he appears as the great Judge. He said :

" When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the

King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

The soul of Jesus, the genius of his work, the supreme law of mankind, all the secret of eternal destiny, is contained within this page. The God concealed under the form of the man of sorrows, identifies himself by love with all forms of suffering on earth. For, "In a word," said he to his disciples, "I am the poor and the needy, the naked, the captives, the feeble and the lowly." It would seem that since he himself has embraced suffering, he claimed its victims for his possession. Nowhere else has such love for man been shown. The conclusion is this: Do ye, my faithful followers, love all the wretched as ye love myself; therein is the whole law, the supreme duty, the essence of religion. If they are hungry, give them food; if thirsty, give them drink; if homeless, shelter them; if naked, clothe them; if weak, assist them; if oppressed, release them.

By such sacrifices may a man make himself worthy of the eternal Kingdom. Eternal love has been willing to communicate itself to its creatures, and it is by love likewise that the creature will render himself worthy of its infinite gifts. As for those who are without charity, they are the accursed. Woe to all selfish beings who know not pity nor love for others, thirsting only for enjoyment, and insensible to the suffering of those miserable people, in whose midst they pass by without pity. The Judge who awaits them will be also without pity.

Love will be the supreme power which will mark off those free and intelligent beings who have reached the limit of their destiny. It will open to some the fountain of eternal life, and, by withdrawing from the others, it will kindle in them that avenging fire which is the torment of the devil and his angels, of those whom they have led astray, and of all creatures of hatred, violence, selfishness, and corruption.

When he went forth from the Temple on that Tuesday evening, the 12th of Nisan (March-April), "hiding himself from the Jews,"[1] when he lingered so long half-way up the slope of the Mount of Olives, facing Jerusalem, as he prophesied in a low voice to his disciples, the approaching destruction of the city and of the Temple, and the end of time, he knew the final failure of his mission. All had been in vain; indefatigable zeal, teachings, reiterated appeals, countless miracles, eloquence, holiness, solemn declarations, threats and warnings; humanly speaking he had failed. After two years of continuous and unflagging activity, not only had he not succeeded either in throwing off the suspicions of the authorities and of the masters of the Law, in convincing them that he was the Christ, or in initiating them into the mysteries of the Kingdom; but he had seen opposition, blindness, violence, and hatred increasing day by day.

The people indeed had shown rather more sympathy with him; but he could plainly see that their sympathy was wavering and shallow. In receiving him with acclamation they were not so much entering into his Spirit as consulting their own feelings of curiosity and self-interest, or the delusions of their own fancy. The only triumph of Jesus during the years spent in preaching the Gospel, was in having inspired with faith a few most simple souls, sometimes also most

[1] John xii. 36.

guilty, but always most sincere. That is the sum of his conquest. It is a lowly triumph which would not have satisfied an earthly ambition, but which is yet the starting-point of all the glory of Jesus. The life of the Master is governed by a law which baffles our experience and our wisdom. If his victories are unlike human victories, so also are his defeats unlike our defeats.

His mission was now ended; he was at liberty to depart. Moreover, he no longer endeavoured to preserve a life which had already won for his Father all the glory which he expected of it, and for his people all the testimonies which would have enlightened and saved them, if his people could have been enlightened and saved.

That Tuesday, regaining Bethany with his disciples after the final struggle, Jesus was more than ever steeped and absorbed in thoughts of his death. Events were about to take a sudden and unexpected turn. The multitude which had at first welcomed him with shouts, in the hope of seeing at last the great signs in heaven that they looked for to herald the dawn of the Messianic era, was growing discouraged. They could not understand a Kingdom of God in lowliness and persecution. The "Hosannah" expired upon the lips of the disappointed patriots. An indignant chorus of blasphemy rose from the party of the Pharisees. The hierarchy was eager with one energetic but prudent blow to make an end of the vexatious and disquieting agitation.

The High Council met again, under the presidency of Caiaphas, in the court of the palace of the high priest. The heads of the priestly families and the elders of the people consulted together. The determination to which they came was to seize upon Jesus by stratagem and to kill him; but all were of opinion that the execution of the measure should be delayed till after the festival, to avoid exciting a commotion.

With all their wisdom these politicians were at fault. On the day of the Passover Jesus was to be put to death. They might set themselves at ease, there would be no commotion. So far from rising to take his part, the people would abandon him. Some even among that multitude which Jesus had

always felt to be so fickle, so shallow, so timid, would demand his death. There was no need of stratagem : an unforeseen incident was to deliver him into their hands.

A terrible conflict was raging within one of the apostles. On this very day, when they were pressing the more closely around their Master, with souls darkened by the thought of his death, one of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot, the man who was entrusted with the scanty purse of the community, was planning to betray his Master. We cannot understand how such an idea could have sprung up in this man's mind if he had faith in the Son of God ; or if he had remained shut out from his confidence and love ; how he could have lived for two years in intimate communion with Jesus.

Jesus saw into the traitor's heart. It was an hour of crisis for the apostles, when, cast off by the Galilaeans who had wished to force upon him the part of a politician, he asked the Twelve if they also were going to abandon him like the people, and, casting his eyes upon them with a look full of profound tenderness, he said unto them, " Have not I chosen you twelve," then, breaking off, he added in poignant sorrow, " and one of you is a devil ? " The phrase referred to Judas : it is an energetic description of the state of that guilty conscience, which was already invaded by the spirit of Satan.

Jesus had to be seized upon in secret ; and Judas presented himself to be the instrument. The cause of the Prophet, on the worldly success of which he had hitherto relied, was lost beyond recovery. He came before the conquerors, the chiefs of the sacerdotal class, and offered his services. He exhibited himself before them in all his venality, not only abandoning his Master, but delivering him up ; not only delivering him up, but selling him.

Every traitor is necessarily a fierce egoist who never forgets his own interest. Judas was greedy and avaricious ; his treason took the form of a bargain. He said to his accomplices : " What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you ? " They promised him thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. The members of the High Council, in holding Jesus so cheap, dishonoured him more than they benefited the traitor. Judas accepted the bargain ; then, without revealing

more fully his infamous project, he sought the opportune moment to put it into execution.

While at Jerusalem Judas was occupied in betrayal and the Sanhedrin was deliberating and plotting, Jesus in his peaceful retirement from the multitude at Bethany prepared his disciples for his approaching death. There, hidden from his enemies, he passed the Wednesday in solitude. There is left to us only one sentence of these last discourses, in which in touching brevity he sums up the thoughts which they expressed : " Ye know," he said to them, " that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE LAST PASSOVER. THE GREAT INSTITUTION OF JESUS

The Passover was to the Jew the chief Feast.

Jesus had not quitted Bethany, but he was desirous of celebrating the Passover, and it was at Jerusalem, in the very heart of the city, that it must be eaten. Seeing that the time was come, his disciples approached him and said: "Master, wilt thou that we go and prepare the Passover? Judas usually had the charge of all that concerned the material wants of the community, but on this occasion he was not employed. Jesus named Peter and John. "Go ye into the city," he said to them, "and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. When ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room, furnished and prepared: there make ready for us."

Jesus had already chosen in his thoughts the scene of his last Passover. But he keeps, even from the disciples whom he is sending, the secret of this selected place; we might suppose, by the mystery in which he shrouds the matter, that he wished to secure a few hours of tranquillity which nothing would break in upon. He had everything to fear, for Judas' plot was completed. The confidence of Peter and John in him, whom they call the Christ, the Son of the Living God, was blind and absolute. They made no question or demur. They listened and departed, happy to have been chosen by the Master.

On entering the city, they found everything as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. The yearling lamb without blemish was chosen by them and slaughtered at the Temple by the hand of the priest; then, as the custom was, roasted and seasoned with bitter herbs. The unleavened

bread was baked and the wine poured out into jars. The unleavened bread and bitter seasoning symbolised the sufferings of bondage; the lamb recalled the victims whose blood had served to mark the doors of the Jewish houses, and to preserve them from the wrath of the destroying angel. It had formerly been eaten by the Jews standing upright, with staff in hand and loins girded, like travellers ready to depart; but time has modified this detail. The Jews, in the time of Jesus, celebrated the Feast of the Lamb, reclining on couches. "To eat upright," say the Rabbis of the Talmud, "becomes the servants; the masters should eat reclining. Certainly it is the bread of affliction and bondage which we eat, but it should be eaten after the manner of freemen, of kings, and of the great."[1]

The number of guests was not to be less than ten, and was sometimes as many as forty or fifty. The banqueting-room was adorned with carpets and hangings. In the middle rose a single low table on which were placed the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the cup of wine which the guests passed from one to another. All around the table, in a half-circle, the couches were prepared, slightly inclined and but little raised above the floor. Each guest was to recline on his left side, keeping his right hand free. The first place was in the centre, the second on the left, the third on the right, and so on.[2] Between the couches and the walls the servants could come and go freely at the master's bidding.

When evening came, Jesus left Bethany with his disciples, and came to the city, to the very place which he had named. Peter and John had arranged everything. After sunset, at the hour appointed for the feast, he sat down to table. He occupied the couch of honour: Peter was behind him at his left, John at his right. By leaning back a little, the beloved disciple could rest his head upon the breast of Jesus. Judas was among the Twelve. Seeing himself surrounded by his followers, Jesus gave utterance to these words, in which profound joy and grief are mingled: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He was moved and saddened by the

[1] *Babyl. Berac.*, fol. 46, 2.
[2] *Hierosol. Taanith*, fol. 68, 1; *Babyl., Berac.*, fol. 64, 2.

thought that this passover was to be the last. But he had kept great things and supreme tokens of his love against this meeting ; he thrilled with joy at the thought of what he was about to reveal and to do.

According to the ritual, the head of the family, after saying a prayer, took the cup of wine and passed it to the guests, saying : " Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine." Then they ate the bitter herbs, steeped in seasonings. Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and said : " Take this, and divide it among yourselves." The sadness of the thought of leaving his own made him add : " I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." In the thought of eternal life after this transitory one, and the joys of the Kingdom and of the house of the Father after the sorrows of this earth, there is for Jesus and for his disciples a sweetness that can temper the bitterness of death. He recalls that glorious future to their minds under the popular image of a banquet. The wine, which will be drunk at the table of the heavenly Father, is the emblem of the Spirit, which will fill all the elect, poured out from Jesus, the cup inexhaustible.

While they were at table eating, Jesus said to them, " Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me."

The accent with which he pronounced this sentence was solemn and full of sadness. The presence of Judas oppressed him. He alone knew the secret of his treachery. None of the disciples suspected that the fatal plot was on foot, and that one of themselves was the soul of it. The words, " There is a traitor among you," threw them into a panic. The thoughts of the uncertainty of the morrow, the coming struggle, the fear of defeat, terrified them. They knew that the Master read as clearly into the future as he did into their own minds, and each one, looking towards him, asked him sorrowfully, " Is it I, Lord ? " Jesus repeated the same words without naming the traitor :

" He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him : but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had not been born."

The sorrow of Jesus was not for himself, but for the traitor. He would save him: he would provoke his conscience to avow the crime, and frighten it with the curse which the guilty man was about to draw upon his head. Judas remained firm and impassive. Instead of saying, "It is I," he said, like the others, "Is it I?" He dissembled, thinking, no doubt, to deceive him whom he had already betrayed. Jesus answered him, "Thou hast said." But no one noticed the words. The mystery remained undiscovered, and there fell upon the minds of all a weight of inexpressible anguish. The feast went on.

Then was enacted a scene which should be read with the faith of those who have transmitted it to us, and with the soul of him who had reserved it for this solemn hour. He knew, says St. John, that this Passover was for him the true "passage," the hour ardently desired, in which he was to depart from this world unto the Father. He had loved his own who were in the world, and he loved them unto the end. No comment on these simple words is needed; we may guess, from the depth of their sweetness, from the fragrance which still seems to cling about them, with how deep a love the heart of the Master was overflowing for his disciples, for those whom the evangelist calls "his own."

This same love was now to inspire in him an act such as no man could have conceived, and such as befits God alone. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, brake it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me." A little later, when the meal was ended, and, according to custom, the time was come for the head of the house to pass a last cup round to all the guests, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood, of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. When ye do this, whensoever ye shall drink, this shall be in memory of me."

Judas was a witness of this manifestation of his Master's love. He took from his hand the bread of which he said "This is my body, which is given for you"; he drank of the cup of which he said, "This is the blood of the new testament." But his rebellious soul would not repent, it would not open

to love. At the thought of so much affection, repaid with so much obstinacy, a fresh cry broke from Jesus : " Moreover, the hand of the traitor is with me at this table," he said ; then, resigning himself to his fate and endeavouring still to rescue by the weight of anathema his stubborn disciple, he added : " The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him : but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed ! " The apostles, in trouble and agitation, looked at one another, and asked among themselves who was the traitor.

The supper was ended. Jesus arose, and " he into whose hands the Father had committed all things ; he who had come from God and was returning to God," forgetting his divine grandeur, " laid aside his garments, took a towel, and girded himself ; poured water in a basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." This was an extraordinary action, befitting a servant, but such as the master, the head of the household, had never been seen to perform.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, the latter exclaimed in confusion : " Lord, dost thou wash my feet ? " Jesus answered and said unto him, " What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter saith unto him, " Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, " If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me." The thought of being severed from his Master touched Peter to the quick. " Lord," he exclaimed, " not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus saith unto him, " He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit : and ye are clean, but not all."

This was a fresh allusion to Judas. The thought of the traitor was always present to Jesus, and he caught at or originated every opportunity with the aim of rescuing him from the crime with which he was beset.

At the idea that treason was to come from one of the disciples they all protested their fidelity, each one insisting upon the value of his services ; and soon, the spirit of emulation growing warmer, they began to discuss the pre-eminence of this or that one in the Kingdom. This question of pre-eminence was constantly recurring to their minds. It shows us how great is power of self-seeking, and of ineradicable selfishness in the human heart, a power which Jesus expressly came to

combat. Selfishness is the law of our perverted nature. It rules all things here on earth, engendering all errors, all vices, all crimes. It is essentially ambitious and tyrannical. Jesus would have it banished from his visible kingdom. The hierarchy and the power which he has founded are not to resemble those of the world.

" The kings of the Gentiles," he said to his apostles, " exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at meat ? But I am among you as he that serveth."

Then he resumed his garments, and, reseating himself at the table, said : " Know ye what I have done to you ? Ye call me Lord and Master : and ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

He felt an emotion of joy as he looked upon his followers, and said to them with a thrill of tenderness : " Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." This courageous fidelity will not be in vain. The Son of man will not always be in the winepress of tribulation ; the days of triumph shall come. " And I," he added, " appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Once more, and for the last time, the presence of Judas troubled him. The traitor's crime stood out inevitable before him. " I speak not of you all," he said, " I know whom I have chosen : but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." The anguish of being betrayed by one of his own, the presence of Judas, the ardent desire to save him, the sight of the traitor resisting every appeal

and only growing hardened in his fatal resolve, agitated the soul of Jesus, and he was troubled in spirit. But the filial self-abandonment to his Father, by which he was condemned to undergo the supreme torture of treason, calmed all his grief; and in a tone full of firmness and solemnity he said again to his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." The disciples, yet more troubled and disturbed, looked at one another, seeking to penetrate the mystery in which Judas was involved, and which the Master, in his goodness, would not disperse.

Jesus had in front of him on his right John, the beloved disciple, and Peter behind him, on his left. Peter could contain himself no longer. He rose a little above Jesus and beckoned to John to ask the name of the traitor. John, with his head laid back, was reclining upon the bosom of Jesus, and he said to him in a whisper, "Lord who is it?" Jesus confided to his friend the sorrowful secret, but he took care that no other one of them, except perhaps Peter, should hear it. "He it is," he replied to John, "to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas Iscariot. Judas took and ate it. This was his crowning act of hypocrisy. The spirit of Satan was in possession of him; he was his instrument; he had drained dry the mercy of God. His measure was full. Jesus spoke to him this terrible sentence, "That thou doest, do quickly." These words contain neither command nor advice, but on the contrary, rebuke; at the same time they showed him that Jesus would do nothing to prevent the work of treachery from being accomplished. None of those at table, except John and perhaps Peter, understood the meaning of these last words of Jesus. Several of them thought that he had given Judas, who carried the bag, some order to buy what was necessary for the feast on the morrow, or to give something to the poor.

When Judas went out it was night. The Passion of Jesus was about to begin; Judas, in the carrying out of his plot, was about to set the whole drama in motion; its action would be quick, terrible, and cruel; before to-morrow's close the blood of the Just One whom he had bartered would be shed. All would be consummated. Jesus was ready. By his words to Judas, "Do that thou hast to do," he had already delivered himself into his hands.

In his suffering and his death lay his great achievement. To be the universal Victim, to redeem and deliver from evil lost mankind, to attract all unto himself by boundless charity, to die to perform the will of the Father, who has resolved through his Son to save the world, to seal with his blood the truth of his teaching and the eternity of his Kingdom, to conquer death after submitting to it, to enter into the life of God, and to open its gates to his elect ; in these things, taken together, is contained the glory of the Son of man and the glory of God. Each one of them gives birth to the other ; each one increases the other, and it is the thought of them that filled the soul of Jesus with light and joy. But a little while, and this very soul, feeling the approach of death, was to feel the throes of inexpressible agony ; but for this moment the Spirit suffered him to feel his power and his glory, and he began his entrance into death with a hymn of triumph.

" Now," cried he, " is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE LAST WORDS

Approaching death sometimes works a transfiguration among men. Their hearts, disengaged from this transient world, are filled with infinite charity, and the words which rise to their lips have the calm and grandeur of eternity. Jesus did not need the approach of death to uplift his human faculties to God : they were ever vibrating to the touch of the Spirit, as the glory of God or the good of man requires. Yet, like those about to die, he reserved to the last moment his grandest words.

Now that Judas was gone out, Jesus found himself alone in the supper-room with the Eleven. He could open his heart to them without constraint. They were all faithful to him ; he had chosen them, given them birth into the life of God, and into his own life, and fed them with his teaching and his love ; he had informed them with his soul and his Spirit. He knew that he was about to leave them ; that the separation was imminent ; that he had no more days, but only hours, ot live with them. His tenderness broke forth in these words : " Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you."

Jesus felt how profound a void his departure was about to make in the souls of his disciples. While he was with them they had nothing to dread ; he was their guardian, he was their strength, their light, their life ; but when he would be no longer by their side, what would become of them ? It was necessary, however, that the separation should take place. The Son of man returned to God, to his Father, to the infinite glory which awaited him in his Kingdom. But it was to be by that way which the will of the Father had marked out ; by the way of violent death and fearful suffering. All manner of anguish was soon to overwhelm him. This was a way as

yet untrodden; he was about to open it. When he should have run his race heroically, he will enter into glory; and only in his train shall men, and they the men of his choice, have power to come. Thus even the apostles themselves who had had the privilege of following the Master since they first were called, amid strife and enmity, and all the dangers of his mission, were not to follow him immediately in death. Jesus now entrusted them with his last wishes.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

This love which Jesus commands his disciples to practise, and which he speaks of as new, should not be confounded with the feelings of humanity which are at the bottom of every sound heart, and which were known to the heathen nations, nor with the precept inscribed in the Decalogue; it has another origin, another sphere, another end, and another law. It has for its principle the living Spirit of God breathing in our heart, and bringing us to see in every human being, without distinction of race and religion, of virtue or education, of condition or sex, a free and intelligent being, capable of becoming a son of God by adoption. Its end is to bring him to God, who is the supreme and infinite good: its law is self-sacrifice, and devotion disinterested and absolute even unto suffering and death.

What Jesus has done for us, he requires us to do for all men. This love is the newest of things. Never before, either among the Jews or among the heathen, had men the slightest perception of it. It is the inimitable mark of the Saviour of men, which will be also the mark of his disciples. Outside the Kingdom of Jesus men hate each other, in spite of their boasted humanity. Even among the Jews, in spite of their Law, we see charity confined within the limits of their race and their religion. Any man who is not of their race and religion is not their neighbour. The Christian alone, if he follows his Master, practises a charity which is limitless and universal; and this he owes even to those who are not of his faith, for Jesus, the Master, loved us before we were worthy of being loved, while we were yet in the darkness and shadow of death.

Such a commandment implies all things. The man who, to communicate to his brethren the God in whom he lives, is prepared to meet sacrifice, suffering, oblivion, even death, is ready to fulfil all virtues, and has already within him the living source of every virtue. "Little children, do as I," Jesus said, at that very moment when he was about to give his life. A precept thus, as it were, embodied in the example of the Master, who proclaims it, has an irresistible clearness and force. No amount of philosophy will explain it better, and no vehemence of exhortation could make it more attractive.

Peter, however, was still troubled by this thought which weighed upon his mind, that Jesus could not believe in the fidelity nor in the courage of his disciples, since he had said to them, as he had said to the Jews, that they could not follow him. He went back to the subject of his departure. "Lord, whither goest thou?" he asked, betraying, in his sadness, how ardent was his longing to accompany him. Jesus replied: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." But, hopeful as they were, these words were not enough for Peter. Like all who love, he could hardly contain his impatience. Not doubting his heart, so neither did he doubt his strength. He said, "Why cannot I follow thee now?" Then Jesus, forseeing the terrible storm which was soon to assail him and his followers, and knowing the frailty of man until he be transformed by the Spirit, cried: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

These prophetic words conveyed, with exquisite delicacy, the hint to the imprudent Peter that he was not strong enough to sustain the struggle upon which he was about to enter. The enemy is a terrible one, and the frailty of man is great; for man has no strength save in him whose all-powerful prayer makes him worthy to obtain the very virtue of God. It is in his purposes that the Eleven should be subjected to temptation. So Jesus hinted to them. They are to find out by experience their misery and helplessness. But by this same experience they will be strong, and, aided by the prayer of Jesus, they will become invincible. Peter, however, was still certain of himself; instead of attempting to understand the truth which his Master thus indistinctly revealed to him,

he cried out in his presumption : " Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake ? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."

Peter must have been amazed. The last illusion to which souls like his will cling, is the mistaking their own strength. When we love we think ourselves capable of anything. Suffering or death seems nothing to us. Of all kinds of rashness, the most incurable and the most unreflecting, and at the same time the most excusable, because it is the most sincere, is not the rashness of the mind or the will, but the rashness of the heart.

The disciples heard their warning. They could not follow the Master now ; the separation was a cruel one for them. They would be given over to a thousand conflicts, a thousand trials, so strong that they would be forced to waver, though but for a moment. The days of tranquillity were at an end ; they would depart with Jesus. While the Lord was with them, providing for them all, then, even though they had nothing, they wanted nothing. " When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything ? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, " But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors : for the things concerning me have an end."

By this we are not to understand that Jesus sends his apostles into the struggle with a full purse and a well-provided scrip, and armed with the sword. We should mistake his purpose if in this bold figure we saw an appeal to material force. Jesus was expressing, by means of vivid metaphors, according to his custom, how strong is the hostility which awaits his disciples, and how they are always to be girded with the sword of the Spirit. He who goes to deliver himself up to death, has no thought of killing ; and his disciples are one day to walk in his footsteps, like the lamb which is dumb as men lead it to the slaughter. The Eleven, however, seem to have mistaken their Master's meaning. At the word " sword " they said, " Lord, behold, here are two swords." Jesus did not answer them ; he changed the subject, only

saying, with sorrowful irony: For the use ye shall have for such weapons, "it is enough."

Then his words became more reassuring; he calmed and consoled them: "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in me." Faith implies goodness and power; we do not believe in aught but what is good and strong. To believe in God and in Jesus, means to believe in their omnipotent goodness. In spite of struggle and hindrance, in spite of all our sufferings and all our frailties, God and his Christ bring events to their final conclusion. They it is who triumph, and believers may reassure themselves, and remain in undiminished confidence and serenity.

Then, wishing to sustain the faith of his followers, Jesus told them undisguisedly whither he was going, and the reason of his departure, and spoke to them of his return, and the reunion which would follow. The separation will only be for a time; all will rejoin him. What he promised to Peter he promised to the Eleven, and to as many as believe in him.

"In my Father's house are many mansions;" they are reserved for all the faithful: "if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

After having explained these mysteries to them, the Master could say to his disciples, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." One of them, Thomas, exclaimed at these words; he had understood nothing of what the Master had been saying, and said plainly: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest: and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." There is no more room for doubt or uncertainty. The goal is the Father, who is the eternal, unchangeable, and inexhaustible fountain of Being, of truth, of love, and of life; that is the goal of the Son of man, not that he may annihilate himself, but that he may be glorified there, and open the gates to all his elect. No one can go to the Father without him; he alone gives us knowledge of him, because he is the Truth; he alone gives us life

in him, because he has within him the Spirit of the Father, and because he gives others to partake of the Spirit.

In these words Jesus was no longer expressing sentiments or facts of the human order, they were such words as ravish the soul into God, and tear away the veil which hides him from our eyes. Between the Father and him the union is ineffable. It is a perfect interdependence of one upon the other. Jesus asserted it in terms of peculiar energy : " If ye had known me," he said to the Eleven, " ye should have known my Father also : and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Although they had recognised in their Master the Christ, the Son of the living God, the apostles had not felt, nor had their vision penetrated further into the closeness of the union which bound him to his Father. By explaining this to them on that day he initiated them into the inmost of his very Being ; ne opened to them the living fountain of the consolations of God, and instilled among them faith in his divinity.

Philip, who had nothing of the defiant and positive spirit of Thomas, hearing Jesus say that they knew the Father and had seen him, asked him, simply enough : " Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Such ingenuousness led Jesus to repeat to them all the mystery of his perfect and essential union with the Father. " Have I been so long time with you," he replied, " and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

He required of them, as his instruments, only two things, prayer and faithfulness. Man, by himself, is of no avail in the realization of the design of Providence ; his strength is nothing worth. He is possessed of no effective energy but by the help of God ; and this is to be gained by prayer alone. " Pray ye therefore," said Jesus unto them ; " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it." Jesus was here speaking as the absolute Master, as God. His manhood is ever the expression of his hidden Godhead. Whereinsoever that humanity is engaged, when

the Son of man prays, suffers, and loses himself in the will of the Father, his acts have an infinite value, by their substantial union with God; his prayer can do all things, his suffering atone for all things, his sacrifice purify all things. "Whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do it."

But prayer will only be availing on condition of being inspired by the love of the believer for his Master; and he will not love him if he have not faith. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," both of those which ye have heard of me while I have been with you, and those which I give you now to-night. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."

Jesus then prayed that that same Spirit who is in him and in the Father, the eternal link between the one and the other, the holy ointment of his humanity, the invisible agent of the great work of salvation, might dwell in them for ever. He would be their living comforter, their consolation, and their light.

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

He who has not experienced such words in his conscience will not understand them; his part is with the world; the Spirit of Jesus is alien to him, and he is refractory to it. But those who welcome its "groanings that cannot be uttered," those who draw life from its light, its impulses, its joys and raptures, understand him and adore; it is to them, as well as to the Eleven, that Jesus speaks.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

It is the faithful conscience and the heart of the believer who keeps the words of Jesus to which the Kingdom of God comes, and in which the manifestation of Christ is accomplished.

"Lord," said one disciple, no doubt thinking only of the external splendour of the Messianic reign, "how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus told him the reason, namely, that the world does not love him, and whoever loves not Jesus cannot know him. "If a man love me," he said with emphasis, "he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It was not the first time that Jesus had revealed to his disciples this Spirit who was to abide in them, and his inward action upon their life. Already, when initiating them into the apostolate, and when foretelling to them future trial, persecution, and suffering, he had strengthened them by the promise, that the Holy Spirit would be with them and speak by their mouth.

"The word which ye hear is not mine," he said to the Eleven, "but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Such gifts can be neither promised nor conferred by man; his love creates nothing in the mind of others; and even to those who accept it, it is not a personal principle of life, a light, a charm, a virtue; it remains something external to them, something sterile. But the love of God, the Spirit of Jesus, creates, transforms, renews, and makes godlike whatever soul he fills. In promising him to his disciples, he could say to them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world's peace is deceitful, he seems to say; it is frail and superficial, vain and empty; but my peace has its fountain-head in my Father's love, and in my own; it is unchangeable, profound, and absolute.

When a man comes to his deathbed he thinks of his sins, and, at the thought of the God who is to judge him, trembles and begs for pardon. The fate which awaits him remains in mystery. What can he do to be sure of the morrow? Who can secure him against the inexorable power of time, against all the unknown and unconquerable obstacles which

his memory, his disciples, and his work will have to face? However great may be his confidence in himself and in the future, he is obliged to leave everything in the hands of him whose power and wisdom can bring all things to pass, and whose eternal purposes are beyond his ken.

Such is not the case with Jesus; with him there is no repentance, no terror before God. He has always been beloved of the Father. His death is only a return to him from whom he came. He goes to receive as Son of man, in the house of his Father, the glory which he enjoys eternally as Son of God. All that he has left behind him will live and flourish. He remains present, though unseen, in his disciples, and will accomplish through them, and in them, the holy work of the Kingdom. Neither time nor the world with its Satanic energy and hatred will prevail against his own; he has conquered time and the world, and, through reliance upon him, his apostles from age to age will carry on the victory.

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. I go away unto the Father, but I come again invisibly by the Spirit. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

The time was passing rapidly. The hour of suffering and death was drawing nigh. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you," said Jesus sadly, "for the Prince of this world cometh." Judas, the traitor, and those who were preparing to seize him, were to Jesus only the instruments of him whom he calls the Prince of this world. He comes, "but he hath nothing in me." Thus, although freed from all evil, he was about to be treated as a malefactor. He saw in his fate his Father's ordinance. "It is necessary," he added, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Then he said, resolutely, "Arise, let us go hence."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### FROM THE SUPPER-ROOM TO GETHSEMANE

THEY rose from table; and, as the custom was, standing, recited the end of the "Hallel," that is, the Psalms recalling the exodus from Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the proclamation of the Law, and the resurrection and sufferings of the Messiah. Jesus saw in them a picture of his own destiny, his struggles, his death, and triumph. The hymn finished, the Master, surrounded by the Eleven, left the supper-room, and set out towards the Mount of Olives. The house in which the Passover had been celebrated was situated on Mount Sion. He must, therefore, have gone out of the city by one of the southern gates, and taken his way towards Gethsemane across the slopes of Ophel, through gardens and vineyards.

It was now the depth of night, one of those calm, bright, star-spangled nights of the East. As they went Jesus gave one more proof of his inexhaustible lovingkindness. He wished his disciples not only to believe in him, but to be in him, and dwell in him. All his thoughts were centred upon such an union. Was it not to draw the whole world to himself and to his Father that he had come, that he had lived, that he was about to die? As he journeyed on and saw the vines which filled the gardens already shooting forth their first branches, he said:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me,

and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Of all the parables which Jesus loved to employ in explaining the mysteries of the eternal life, that of the vine and the branches is perhaps the most beautiful; none expresses with more felicity and force the profound, intimate, and necessary relation between Jesus and his disciples. His lovingkindness took delight in interpreting it.

He wished the Eleven to know that he was to them the Principle of Life. They live in him and through him alone. The sap flows from him into those who are incorporated in him, as the branch is in the stem. Every branch that does not hold to that blessed stem is dead. This was shown by the example of the faithless disciple; as he had not lived in union with the Master, he had been cut off. But the green and living branches must be pruned; for this is the Law of sacrifice. No member of Christ, that mysterious stem, can escape it; the more vigorous he is, the more must he be tried. The Father, who is the husbandman, will demand of him much fruit, and he can bear more fruit only on condition of greater sacrifice.

To multiply the disciples of Jesus, to win from them heroic virtues, to spread over the whole earth the vine which he has planted, to prune its branches, to ripen the fruit which is to be crushed in the winepress and is to furnish the new wine of the Kingdom—this is the work of the Father among mankind, which he is resolved to save.

At this moment the soul of Jesus overflowed with infinite love. "As the Father hath loved me," he said, "so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Whosoever is filled with the divine love, experiences peace, happiness, and satisfaction. It sheds a calm in him upon the aspirations with which every soul is harassed, for they are conquered by that charity "which passeth all understanding, and keeps our hearts and minds." We may picture to

ourselves, as we read these still-glowing pages, how great was the emotion of the disciples of Jesus, when on that starlit journey into the valley of Cedron, he expressed his boundless affection towards them. "This is my commandment," he said, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

The thought of his approaching death crossed his mind; this time he saw in it only the trial of his love for his own, and he spoke yet more tenderly: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Here he dwelt upon the word "friends." "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

Let them not be puffed up; they are what they are by grace alone. Jesus said to them: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

Jesus calls his own, and they come to him; his choice is the principle of their new life. Their destiny is a mighty one: to cover the world; to produce upon the face of the earth the fruits of divine virtue; but their strength is divine likewise. The Father watches over them; they will ask of him, in the name of Jesus, all their desire, and the Father will give it them.

Jesus said to them again, as though he could not repeat it often enough: "These things I command you, that ye love one another." This is the sum of all; in their dispersal throughout a world where hatred awaits them, they will find in it strength, and joy, and peace. With this hatred, this hellish spirit of lost mankind, Jesus would fain acquaint his disciples, for it is not to be avoided; he went on to picture to them, and to strengthen them against its assaults; and thus, however terrible, they will overcome it.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The world, in the language of Jesus, is mankind in subjection to

the power of evil. All that is therein is vanity, lust, and pride; selfishness is at once its principle, its law, its aim; it prefers itself to all things, even to God; it wishes to reign, tyrannize, and enjoy. To insure success it will stop at nothing; it is ready for all stratagems, all tyranny, all violence, all crime. And it is because Jesus is the only human being in absolute opposition to the world in this sense, that all this mass of hatred was heaped up against him, hatred which was at bottom the hatred of God and goodness. It was likewise to descend to his disciples. "Remember," said he, "the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

Such hatred on the part of the world Jesus had encountered in its most terrible form, among the Jewish people, in the hypocrisy of a false zeal, a false piety, and a perverted religion. The thought of those who were guilty of it moved him deeply. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The Spirit of truth seized upon a few disciples who had been witnesses of the whole life of their Master, to found the Church; and hardly was the Church created before she began to publish to the four winds of heaven the holiness, justice, goodness, and divinity of Jesus. Her voice, which thunders ever louder as the ages roll on, has overpowered all insults, whether of the blasphemy of the Jews or the unbelief of these later ages. Nothing has been strong enough to stifle or restrain it. On those ears which are full of the moans, the murmurs, and the cries of mankind, it falls as the strongest, the most harmonious, the most holy, the most unfaltering of voices: it has within it the strength of the martyr, the holiness of virtue, the grandeur of genius, and the indestructibility of faith. No other man in all the earth has ever found himself compassed about with such testimony and such acclamation.

When Jesus had given his disciples a divine hope for their emcouragement, and had then shown them how his persecutors, in their wickedness, stood ready to turn upon them all that tide of hatred of which he was to be the first to taste, he added: "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

The disciples could not shake off the thought of separation which returned incessantly to their minds, in all its sadness, but Jesus comforted them again; he nad wished to bathe them in the rapture with which he himself was thrilling as he went unto his Father; but they were thinking only of the feeling of loneliness which his departure was about to cast upon them. Jesus said to them: "Now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

While Jesus yet lived, in voluntary submission to the laws of our suffering, passive, mortal humanity, he was none the less filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit shone upon all those who approached him. At the same time the very laws which bounded in his human nature seemed to form some restraint upon his influence. Before it could become all-encompassing, sovereign, and universal, the humanity which was its home must enter into a state of universal and triumphant sovereignty. Then, from the bosom of the Father, where it would reign in glory, it would pour out the Spirit in all its fulness; and the work of sanctification, consolation, and strengthening would be inaugurated; such was his comforting promise to them.

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they

believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged."

In these three words, pregnant as they are with unfathomable mystery, we see the full operation of the Holy Spirit and the victory which he was to win over the world through the disciples of Jesus.

After having confided to his disciples so many truths which they could only half understand, Jesus paused: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Even in his reticence he proved his love to them. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

It is he, in fact, who must initiate the apostles fully into what St. Paul termed "the mystery of Jesus," into what Jesus terms "all truth." He will make them understand the universal redemption by the death of the Messiah, the abolition of the religion of Moses, the rejection of Israel, the call of the Gentiles, and the sublime evolution of the Kingdom of God.

The last moments were flying fast. "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

Enigmatical words these, alluding obscurely to the short period of death and burial, during which Jesus was to disappear from the eyes of his saddened and dispersed disciples, leaving hardly a ray of hope and faith, and then to the glorious period of his life after the resurrection, during which Jesus would appear to his followers to console them and instruct them once again, before finally returning to his Father to send down to them the Spirit. The Eleven did not understand; they asked one another in silence what the Master meant. He explained himself to them.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into you. A woman when

she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

While Jesus was with his own, it was to him that they betook themselves ; he was their counsellor, their comfort, their visible happiness. When he was gone his Spirit was to take his place. He was to live by that Spirit in their souls, and they should have no more need to question him. Formerly, he had spoken to them of divine things in parables ; in such figurative language as veiled the truth even while it revealed it ; but the Spirit whom he would send was to tear away the veil, and, in a language which no ear may hear, and which no lip can utter, he would impart to them the mysteries of God. He should be a Master within them, who should inspire them with all that might be needful, and enlighten them with all brightness ; when once they had received his Spirit, the apostles and the faithful would, like Jesus, obtain all things from the Father. That is the true and the only efficacious prayer. It is not we who pray, it is the Spirit of Jesus that prays in us. What the Gentile and the Jew called prayer was merely a human supplication ; it had not its source in eternal love ; it could not find access to the love of the Father, and this was the secret of its barrenness. But the prayer of Jesus is always efficacious, for the Father who hears him loves us.

"At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you : for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." These few words sum up the whole being and the whole history of the eternal Son of God. He was not, as we are, born out of nothingness ; he proceeded from the Father, begotten from eternity ; he came into this world, incarnating his divine form in our suffering and mortal

human nature; now, by death, he leaves this world, and in dying puts off from him infirmity and mortality, to go to the Father, who will clothe him again, even in his human form, with his glory and his power.

At this the Eleven were dazzled and delighted. The Master had divined their secret thoughts and doubts; his words appeared to them in all their clearness. They exclaimed: "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." The divinity of Jesus shone in them and upon them; here was faith such as the Master desired. When he heard so unmistakable an expression of it from his followers, he must have been overjoyed. "Do ye now believe?" he said; but the prospect of the future and of a threatening future made him add with sadness: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." With these words of triumph and perfect confidence the discourse was ended.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE PRAYER OF JESUS. HIS AGONY. HIS ARREST

As Jesus was on his way with the Eleven towards Gethsemane, they came into the valley of the Cedron, the same which the Scripture calls " The Valley of Shaveh " or " The King's Dale." There Abraham had met Melchizedek, king of Salem, who made an offering of bread and wine to God and blessed the father of the faithful. There David, flying from the anger of Absalom, had passed, bare-footed and with covered head, in the company of his faithful servants, on his flight into the desert. A brook, now dried up, flowed in the bottom of the valley, and went to swell the stream Bir-Eyoub, on the other side of Siloam, which becomes in the rainy season an angry torrent, rushing headlong towards the Dead Sea, across a burning and calcined soil, in which it sinks and is lost.

Nothing could be sadder or more solitary than this narrow Wady, with its funeral monuments : the tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Zachariah, and the sepulchres covering all its eastern slope. It was, we may suppose, in front of these burial-places that Jesus stopped. Before offering himself, he who was the eternal victim and the eternal priest, addressed to his Father the prayer which contains the whole virtue and spirit of his sacrifice.

He prayed aloud, for the Eleven must be initiated into this sacrifice, his greatest work ; and after having, as was always his custom, lifted up his eyes to heaven, he said :

" Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I

had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, by that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast

given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it : that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This prayer of Jesus is vaster than the earth and the worlds, above all the ages, mightier than the visible heaven to which he raised his eyes ; it is as infinite and eternal as the God to whom it is addressed, as the love by which it is inspired, as the supplications which are formulated in it, as the divine forces which it set in motion.

When his prayer was ended, Jesus crossed the Cedron. " All ye shall be offended," said he to his disciples, " because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter was moved. The Master had already prophesied to him his denial a few hours before, but he could not believe it. He cried, " Though all shall be offended yet will not I." And Jesus said unto him, " Verily I say unto thee, that this day even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." But Peter only replied the more vehemently, " If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," and all the Eleven renewed loudly their protestations of fidelity.

Then they went along the left side of the stream, and, treading in their Master's footsteps, followed the valley right upwards to the Mount of Olives. The gardens at Jerusalem, as in most Eastern towns, were not within the city boundaries, but lay all around the walls, principally on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. At the foot of this hill, a hundred yards from the left bank of the torrent, there was a garden called Gethsemane. Jesus often retired thither in the evening with his disciples to pray ; he must have passed many nights there on his different visits to Jerusalem. The place is sad and solitary, and seems to breathe the spirit of austerity and religion. Towards the west nothing is seen beneath the sky but the great walls of the Temple, the summits of sacred buildings, and the sombre tower of Antonia. To the right

are the scarped sides of Mount Scopus, to the left the valley of Jehoshaphat with its tombs.

Jesus loved this solitary garden ; he wished to pray there for the last time, and to be crushed there with affliction, as the olives were crushed in the presses of Gethsemane.[1] He entered into the enclosure with the Eleven, and said to them, " Sit ye here, while I go and pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and went with them a stone's throw apart.

Then he began to be sorrowful : he became sore amazed, and very heavy. " My soul is exceeding sorrowful," he said, " even unto death ; tarry ye here, and watch with me." And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, " Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee ; take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." And he came, and found them, sleeping, and said unto Peter, " Simon, sleepest thou ? couldest not thou watch one hour ? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." This remark, when addressed to the Eleven, was profoundly significant, for as far as spirit and will are concerned they did not hesitate to follow their Master to the death ; but the burden of matter which weighed upon their spirit made them begin to sink already. Jesus went away a second time, and said, " O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Then he returned, and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.

He left them again, and prayed a third time, saying, " Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come a third time to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, " Sleep on now, and take your rest."

Such, according to the three first Evangelists, is the authentic narrative of the prayer and agony of Jesus at Gethsemane. The mythical school of critics will not dare to pretend that it has been imagined for the glory of Jesus. Heathens, such

[1] *Gethsemane* is the Hebrew for an olive press.

as Celsus and Julian, have found a difficulty in what they called his weakness before death ; and the Docetae, who loathed the idea of humanity in Christ, struck it out of the Gospels. But the scene at Gethsemane is in reality one of the grandest and, to anyone who can understand it, one of the most touching.

Never before, in all his life, had Jesus shown to his most intimate disciples such an agony. As he passed the Cedron, and crossed the threshold of the garden of Olives, the serenity of his soul was darkened, and he was seized with inexpressible anguish. At the very moment when his passion and suffering was about to begin he was troubled, afraid, and weak, and grew sad at the prospect of death. But a little while before he had been hastening towards death, and praying for it to his Father as the means of glorifying him. Once he had called it his cup, and said that he was eager to drink it. He had called it his baptism, and said, " How am I straitened till I be baptised." Now he cried in distress, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

What meant this inward conflict ? Did the will of Jesus grow weak before that of his Father ? Was he shaken in his resolve to die ? No ; for in the bitterest of the struggle which overwhelmed him, he said, " Father, thy will be done, not mine." But the will is not the whole man : even in those who are filled with God and obey him unreservedly, there are a number of sensitive faculties which abhor pain ; there is an instinct of self-preservation, a desire to live, which battles against death. These sensitive faculties and this desire to live had in Jesus, as had all other faculties essential to man, their full development. He might have freed himself from pain and from all loathing of death, but he would not do so. It was by suffering and death that he was truly man ; it was by them that he was " the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." He was to suffer and to die ; and all the bitterness that suffering can contain, all the terror that is meant by death, he would accept. So far from averting torture, God, who was in him, would add to it infinity.

Before engaging in the struggle of public life, he had retired to the desert to repel there the temptations of the Evil One. Before going to die he came to that garden of Gethsemane, to conquer there all the failings of human nature, by identifying his will with the will of his Father. His life had been without sin, his death should be without weakness. His

resolution was taken. The worst of the crisis past, we see him once more, comforted of God, standing in the midst of his sleeping disciples. They were overcome with weariness, heavy with sorrow; they had not had the courage to pray, yet they were about to enter into temptation. Jesus waited and watched; the terrible moment was come.

"Rise up," he said to his disciples, "let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." And as though it had been his wish to give himself up of his own accord, he advanced with the Eleven to meet the traitor at the entrance of Gethsemane. While he was yet speaking, a great multitude appeared. It was composed of soldiers of the Roman cohort and of the Temple guard. Among them were to be seen a few persons of the priestly aristocracy, doctors and elders, and the commander-in-chief of the cohort in person. The presence both of the legionaries and the Temple guard leads us to suppose that the Jewish authorities had concerted with the Roman governor to arrest Jesus. According to Roman legislation in conquered provinces, no arrest could take place without the aid of the civil power. It was necessary, moreover, to avoid all tumult, and even in acting by night, and using all despatch, they were still afraid that the multitude might be given the alarm, and, hearing of the arrest of the Prophet, break out in tumult. The Mount of Olives was the quarter frequented by the Galilaean pilgrims. The cohort was there in readiness to put down any uproar.

These people were armed with swords and staves, and furnished with lanterns and torches. Judas walked in front and led them on. He knew the retreat of the Master, for he had often been there with him; and it was thither that he brought the band to take him. In order to prevent any mistake the traitor had provided a token with which to point out the victim. "Whomsoever I shall kiss," he said to them, "that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely." Usually it was the Master who embraced the disciple, the disciple rarely embraced the Master.

He was about to enter Gethsemane, when Jesus, at the head of the Eleven, came to meet him. Judas approached. "Hail, Master!" he said, and he kissed him. "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" These were the last words which the wretched man heard from the Master's lips. To his treacher-

ous kiss Jesus replied by the word "Friend." Judas might have felt in it the love which pardons all things to the truly penitent, even hypocrisy and treason. Jesus then advanced resolutely towards the band. "Whom seek ye?" he said. "Jesus of Nazareth," was the reply. "I am he." At these words they went backward, and fell to the ground.

He who had just allowed the traitor to see his divine goodness, flashed forth in a word his no less divine strength. His love might be repelled, but no one could resist his power if he wished to overthrow all things. His ascendency, when he will, is supreme; his majesty, whensoever he assumes it, terrible. It was by this means that he had chased forth the traders from the Temple, and on different occasions made his exasperated enemies let the stones fall from their hands. On this day he showed it for the last time; he would have men to know that he was a voluntary Victim. They only seized upon him because he willed it. They were not to touch his disciples; they should take him alone, because such was his will.

The guards who had fallen backward, now recovered themselves. Once more Jesus said to them, "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way," he added, pointing to his disciples grouped behind him. The words which he had spoken in prayer to his Father must be literally fulfilled: "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." At this the satellites laid their hands on him. The disciples, seeing their Master arrested, said to him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" The instinct of violence carried them away. Simon, without waiting for his Master to reply, drew his sword, and struck one of the high priest's servants, named Malchus, and smote off his right ear. Jesus quickly calmed his disciples, and, addressing Peter, said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it? Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Then he touched with his hand the ear of Malchus, and healed it. "Are ye come out against me," said he to the

leaders of the priests, and to all their armed company, "as against a thief, with swords and staves? I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye laid no hold on me, but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Then all his disciples forsook him and fled. One young man, who followed him, had a linen cloth about his naked body. They would have laid hold on him, but, leaving the linen cloth, he fled from them naked. Jesus remained alone, bound hand and foot, in the custody of the cohort, the tribunes, and the satellites of the Sanhedrin.

We see with what firmness, in the first act of his Passion, the Victim repudiated and repressed all violence, even though animated by noble zeal. He who said, "I am come to give my life," did not suffer, in his defence, any attempt on the lives of his aggressors. Besides, the arrest of Jesus, tyrannical and brutal as it was, emanated from lawful authority, from the Roman power, represented by the tribune and his soldiers, and from the religious power, represented by the satellites of the Temple, and the messengers of the high priest. The armed resistance into which Peter had suffered himself to be hurried was at once ill-considered and useless. Even supposing it could have been of any avail to stir up a movement of revolt in the Galilaean multitude, it was contrary to the will of Jesus and the will of God.

The command to Peter to put up the sword in the scabbard is a command for eternity. The servants of God will endeavour oftentimes to strike a blow, like Peter, in defence of truth and of Christ, but they will always hear the voice of the Master, crying to them, "Hold! he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." The charity of God will heal the wounds which the violence of man has made; and, taught by the example of Jesus, the disciples will accept gladly the part of victims, and, leaving in the Father's hands all care for their defence, they will go forth to die as he died.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Jesus was led away captive, without tumult, to the palace of the high priest. The secret of his arrest had been well kept. No one in Jerusalem had a suspicion of what had taken place during the night. The band returned down the valley of the Cedron, crossed the mountain stream, and took the road which led southwards along the walls of the city, making their way towards Sion. Everything had been prepared beforehand against the coming of Jesus. The conspiracy was to be executed without hesitation or delay, but with all the legal formalities to which these devout jurists attached so much importance.

The father-in-law of the high priest, a man named Hanan, seems to have played an important part in the choice of the measures which had been taken. He was the leader of the Sadducean sect, and a member of the family which at that time supplied the greater number of the high priests.

The palace of Hanan was situated on the road leading to that of Caiaphas. The prisoner was shown to the old man, who, as the guiding spirit of the conspiracy, must have rejoiced at its success. Among those who had arrested Jesus was, no doubt, Judas, who asked for, and received, the price of his treachery. He was now happy in the possession of the thirty pieces of silver which had been promised him two days before. Only a short halt, however, was made at Hanan's house; every moment had been marked out, and it was before Caiaphas that Jesus was to appear to undergo his preliminary investigation.

The palace of the high priest was situated on Mount Sion. Like all princely mansions it was composed of a central block, flanked by two wings. The space enclosed by these structures formed the inner court or "atrium," which was entered through a portico, access to it being given by a flight of steps. If we

call to mind the words of Caiaphas, at the meeting at which the members of the High Council deliberated as to the course which should be adopted against Jesus : " It is expedient that one man should die for the people," and consider, that it was he who was about to preside at the trial, we shall infer that the fate of the accused was easy to foresee.

Nevertheless, after the tumult incident to the arrest, and the hasty flight of the disciples, Peter drew towards those who were leading Jesus away, and followed the escort at a distance. He loved his Master ; a hidden power drew him along on his footsteps ; he desired to know what the end was to be. When he had reached the city he was joined, near the pontifical palace, by an unknown disciple of Jesus. The records do not give his name ; we may imagine him to be Joseph of Arimathaea. Being a member of the Sanhedrin, he was known to the high priest. When the band of men charged with the arrest of Jesus entered the atrium, the disciple followed after it, while Peter remained at the gate outside, seeing which the anonymous disciple came up and spoke to the gate-keeper, and Peter entered. A brazier was alight in the middle of the court. The night was cold. The servants of the high priest and the guards of the Temple who had taken part in the arrest were seated round the fire. Peter remained with them awaiting the issue of the preliminary investigation.

Caiaphas presided over the tribunal, held in one of the halls of the palace which looked out upon the court. He began to question Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. It was one of the duties of the Sanhedrin to acquaint themselves with new sects and new doctrines. Jesus in the eyes of the high court was only a mere sectary, a heretic, and they were anxious to have a confession of this from his own lips. The accused defended himself from the charge of being the head of a secret society and the propagator of ideas which he was afraid to avow openly : " I spake openly to the world," he answered ; " I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold they know what I said."

This reply of Jesus declining to satisfy the high priest was looked upon as a want of respect. One of the servants, wishing to flatter and avenge his Master, said to Jesus, " Answerest

thou the high priest so ? " and struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. Jesus endured the outrage, and, with superhuman dignity and meekness, said to his insulter, " If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou me ? " All his teachings had been in public, and his judges themselves had been among his audience, he had said nothing to his disciples which he had not said to every one ; why then question him ? In the sight of those in power, the greatest crime that the weak can commit is to be in the right ; if the weak man has the courage to declare and prove his right, his courage appears to the minds of the authorities no less than an insult, and some courtly officer about them, anxious to win their favour, will generally be found burning to chastise it.

The high priest having failed to gain his object by captious examination, the members of the council, that is, the leaders of the sacerdotal class, sought to find some false testimony which should afford an excuse for the death-sentence, for they aimed at nothing less than death. Many false witnesses, suborned on purpose, came to bear witness against Jesus, but their testimony, the drift of which is unknown to us, failed to support the capital charge. At last two false witnesses came, and one of them declared : This man has said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days. The second confirmed the evidence of the first : Yea, we have heard him say, I will destroy this Temple which is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. These words savoured of blasphemy ; they might be taken to be an offence against the house of God. The veneration of the Jews for the dwelling-place of Jehovah amounted to superstition ; insult against the Temple was punishable with death. But the assembly was not unanimous as to the guilt of such language.

Nevertheless, the high priest put a question to Jesus, standing up in the midst of his colleagues and saying to him : Answerest thou not a word in reply to all these men lay to thy charge and depose against thee ? But Jesus remained silent. Why should he have spoken ? He could not confound the false witnesses ; he had no one to defend him. He could not convince these judges, for they were met together to condemn him at whatever cost.

Then Caiaphas solemnly put to Jesus the decisive question : Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God ? Answer, I adjure thee in the name of the living God. Jesus, who throughout his public life had refrained from assuming this title of Christ, knowing how wrongly it was understood both in popular opinion and by the learned themselves, but who had always announced himself as the Son of God in the presence of the people, the Pharisees, and the Sanhedrin ; he who had laboured, taught and lived among them only for the purpose of establishing his divine sonship, did not now hesitate, when questioned by the high priest, although he knew full well that the reply would be his death-sentence, to break through his silence, and to bear his supreme testimony to the truth, answered : " I am he ; and one day ye shall behold the Son of man seated at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

In this solemn declaration was summed up all his doctrine concerning his own person and work. It called up before the minds of his judges that which was most shocking to them, the participation of the Son of man in the power of God, his true divinity. The prisoner was exalting himself to the sublimity of God, and his announcement to his judges, in the words of the prophet, of his return on the clouds, conveyed a warning to them that they should one day appear before his judgment-seat. The general indignation burst forth. The high priest, as a mark of sorrow, rent his clothes. There was no longer any necessity for investigating the claims of the accused to the title of Messiah, or of testing the evidence of the witnesses. Here was an avowed pretender to the incommunicable glory of God and usurper of his divinity. Never before had such blasphemy been heard. Ye have heard him, said he ; he has blasphemed. What further need have ye of witnesses ? What think ye ? The deliberation was not of long duration. All judged him instantly to be guilty of death.

Not one of the members present at the enquiry, not one of the rabbis, impossible as it was that they could be ignorant of the teaching of the prophets concerning the divinity of the Messiah, rose to defend Jesus, or even to ask on his behalf for a reprieve, which would have permitted him to make good his claims. If Joseph of Arimathea was there, he must have remained silent in the conviction that no objection would have a chance of being heard.

That sceptical Sadducees, such as Hanan or Caiaphas, should have cried out " Blasphemy " on hearing a man speak of having equal power with God, is easily explained ; but for the literary Pharisees no excuse can be attempted. If they had likewise distorted the teaching of the prophets they had betrayed their mission ; and if they believed in the divine dignity of the Messiah, they could not be justified in crying " Blasphemy." He who declared himself to be the Messiah ought to be judged by his acts and his life ; and the accused who was before them had given countless proofs of his mission before their eyes. But these so-called judges were blind with hatred. The tyrannous power which persecuted Jesus longed for his death, and it was the blind application of the text of the Law upon which they based their verdict. " The blasphemer of God shall be rooted out," said Leviticus ; now, to attribute to oneself the incommunicable glory of God is the greatest of blasphemies ; this was the crime of Jesus, and he must die. Such would have been indeed the crime of Jesus if he had not been the true Messiah ; for the Messiah is, according to the prophets, the Son of God.

It was then the duty of the Sanhedrin to proceed officially to the examination of Messianic titles of him whom they had called before their tribunal. The Sanhedrin did not do so ; by not doing so, that body violated the rules of justice. By invoking against the accused, without previous investigation, the law of blasphemy, it exposed itself to the guilt of passing sentence not merely against an innocent man, but against the Son of God himself. It was therefore guilty, and must bear the responsibility of the greatest of crimes, if crime is to be measured by the holiness and dignity, and the inviolable and sovereign right of him against whom it was committed.

The investigation was at an end ; it was still night. The words of the sentence against Jesus, " He is worthy of death," ran through the palace of Caiaphas. Then was presented a horrible scene, in which every sort of insult was let loose upon him. He was spat upon, his face was covered, and men buffeted him with their hands, saying : " Christ, prophesy who it is that has struck thee." The satellites of the palace struck him brutally with their fists, and a torrent of all sorts of blasphemies was poured upon him. As a prisoner, in chains and already marked out for death, he should have been held

inviolable; but there was no pity for him. The hate with which he was pursued by the authorities seems to have found a vent in the brutality of their satellites.

Peter, during the questioning of his Master, had remained in the court among the servants, warming himself at the brazier. One of the maid-servants of the high priest, the same who had let him in, approached him, and when she had looked upon him, said: Thou also art one of his disciples; thou wert with Jesus of Nazareth. Peter denied it, saying: Woman, I know him not; I know not what thou sayest. And seeing that he was recognised, he left the court and passed out into the porch. The cock crew the first time.

Then another maid-servant observed him and began to point him out to those who were there. He was one of them, said she; he was with Jesus the Nazarene. Peter came back again to the brazier, among the guards, in order the more easily to avert suspicion; but while he stood and warmed himself someone said to him: Art thou not one of his disciples? Thou art surely of them. And they persisted in asking him this question; but Peter still denied, saying: "No, I am not," and swearing that he did not know the man.

Another hour elapsed. The assembly had broken up. Jesus was brought in bonds into the atrium. At this moment Peter was still being assailed by the same question: Art thou one of the disciples of the Galilaean? Yes, said the bystanders, thou art one of them, thine accent shows it plainly. One of the servants of the high priest, the father of him whose ear Peter had cut off, said to him: Have I not seen thee in the garden? Then Peter denied for the third time. Man, said he, I know not what thou sayest, and he began to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. When at length he ceased, upon the instant the cock crew again.

Jesus, who was kept apart in the corner of the court, turned towards Peter and looked upon him. The effect of the look of Jesus was inexpressible. Simon remembered that he had said unto him: "Before the cock crows twice thou shalt deny me thrice." His soul was deeply stirred. He left the house of the high priest weeping bitterly.

It was necessary that Jesus should know all sorrows. This repeated denial of Peter was to him, at this hour in which he was judged worthy of death, more cruel than his condemnation itself. He who was the first of his apostles,

whom he had already appointed to be the head of his Church, denied him and knew him no more. He who had solemnly confessed him to be Christ, the Son of the living God, now spoke of him as "this man," and did not wish to be his disciple.

The time should come when Peter would be transformed. As yet he feared the very hirelings of a high priest. Afterwards, when the Spirit of his Master should have taken possession of his soul, he was to fear nothing. He denied him now, but his faith should grow to be unfaltering; he felt his weakness now, but he was to know all the strength of God, and was learning to take compassion on the needs of those who were to be committed to his government.

At the look of Jesus, bitter tears rained from his eyes, and bore witness that his regeneration had begun.

The law in force at this time required of the Sanhedrin, in pronouncing the capital sentence, that the high assembly should not give judgment without a preliminary investigation, for the purpose of obtaining information respecting the charge.

It was obviously in order to comply with this formality that the high priest, Caiaphas, called together some of the members of the supreme council. We have seen in what fashion the case of Jesus was dealt with. Some hours later, when morning had dawned, the high assembly, which was to pass the death-sentence on the accused, met beforé sunrise in the Lischat-ha-Gazith, near the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus was led thither by the same escort which had arrested him. It was to him a deliverance, though but for a moment, relieving him from that detention in the court of Caiaphas, during which he was subjected to every kind of insult. But to his last breath his tortures were destined to go on increasing, and he was to drain the chalice to its dregs without a murmur.

He appeared before the high assembly. All the members were there: high priests, elders, scribes, and doctors. His chains were removed, and, standing in the presence of his judges, he was asked to declare if he was the Christ. He said unto them: "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go."

In the minds of these men the sentence was pronounced

already. Jesus knew it, and he told the reason of his silence. He would not enter into a defence, as he had the right ; he would not argue. These men did not desire truth and justice, but his death only. He declared once again his Messianic dignity, in the same form which had once already roused their anger ; he spoke of his divine glory that was to be, and of his being the co-equal of God in authority. It was the challenge of the Son of God to man, and of the innocent prisoner to his judges.

" Hereafter," he said, " shall the Son of man sit at the right hand of the power of God." Then they all cried out : " Art thou then the Son of God ? " And he said unto them, " Ye say that I am." This was the blasphemy that this iniquitous tribunal was expecting and wishing to hear from the lips of Jesus. The sitting was at once closed, and sentence of death unanimously pronounced. The assembly rose, and Jesus was once more put in chains.

A new incident here intensified yet more deeply the horrors of this mockery of justice. Judas confessed the innocence of him whom the Sanhedrin had declared to be a blasphemer. The traitor, seeing Jesus condemned, was seized with remorse : the thought of the consequences of his crime terrified him. He took the thirty pieces of silver and came to the chief priests and elders, saying : " I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood." " What is that to us ? " they answered, " see thou to that." Then, in despair, he threw the money down in the Temple, in their presence, perhaps even in the hall in which the Sanhedrin had pronounced the sentence. Those who had just committed the most terrible of iniquities, were afraid, in their formalism, to touch the pieces of money, which seemed, in their eyes, to be stained with guilt. " It is the price of blood," they said, " and it is not lawful to place it in the treasury." A consultation was held, and they decided to purchase with the traitor's money a potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Judas had in him no saving humility, no repentant tears, no trust in God. His treason appeared to him to be beyond all pardon ; he went away, blind with despair, and hanged himself.

Perhaps surprise will be expressed that the Jews did not immediately stone Jesus, as they afterwards stoned Stephen.

But once they were fallen under the Roman yoke, once the pontificate had abdicated its independence, and political Sadduceeism had gained a preponderance in the Sanhedrin, the power of the sword, that great attribute of sovereignty, had disappeared. The high assembly, even when passing sentence for those crimes which came within the scope of its jurisdiction, could no longer pronounce capital sentence; it had to content itself with sentences which, to be final and valid, had to receive the sanction of the governor. The execution was therefore reserved to Roman authority and its agents.

Jesus was brought before Pilate. It was now morning. The Praetorium, or judgment-hall, abutted on the walls of the Temple enclosure, and formed part of the huge structure of the tower of Antonia, which rose at the north-west angle of the great quadrilateral which comprised all the sacred buildings. It was there that the Roman cohert and the governor dwelt in inviolable security. The great central tower was flanked by four others, united together by solid, rampart-like structures, surrounded by deep ditches. This vast edifice, judging by its dimensions, might almost have been taken for a city; within it the arrangements necessary for a fortress were combined with palatial luxury. Pilate, the governor, lived at Caesarea, but came to Jerusalem on the occasion of the national festivals, his presence being rendered necessary by the great concourse of Jews by which they were frequented. It was rarely that they passed off without some trouble having been stirred up by the fanaticism of the Zealots.

The members of the Sanhedrin hastened to the dwelling of Pilate. The hour was early, but Roman justice held its sittings at all hours, from sunrise onwards. Pilate must have received information of the event the evening before, since the captain of the cohort had taken part in the arrest of Jesus, and, no doubt, had consented to receive them when they should present themselves. They gave up Jesus, who entered the Praetorium, but they themselves refused to cross the threshold of the palace. They were about to celebrate the Paschal Feast that same evening, and by entering into a Gentile abode they would have received defilement which would have excluded them from participation in the sacred

festival. Pilate must have come out of the Praetorium, and stood at the gate of his palace, to discuss the matter with the Jews. " What charge bring ye against this man ? " he asked. The reply was short and arrogant : " If he were not a malefactor, we would not have given him up to you."

These judges of Jesus, in their pride, would not admit the possibility of their sentence being informal or invalid ; what they wanted from the governor was that he should execute him on the spot. As soon as they had pronounced sentence thay considered that the case was decided, and there was nothing left but to put it into execution. Pilate did not seem disposed to assume the part of an executioner. " If this be so," said he, " take him and judge him according to your laws ; punish him yourselves." Then the Jews said to him, " It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This was an avowal of their dependence. It was precisely his death which they were seeking, and yet they said that they had no right to put any man to death. Formerly, they had stoned false prophets, and no doubt Jesus would likewise have been stoned to death if the Jews had found a warrant in the words of Pilate for an outburst of their hatred, but everything was to be brought about as Jesus had foretold. God controlled every event in the life and death of his Son ; it was his will that he should be crucified, and he was crucified.

Then, in order to urge Pilate to action, the Jews agreed to lay the case before him, and submit it to his judgment. This man, they said, perverts our nation ; he forbids tribute to be paid to Cæsar, and he claims to be the Christ-King.

The false and treacherous character of these complaints is remarkable. This charge against Jesus was purely a political charge ; yet it must be clear to anyone who has followed step by step the work of the Prophet, that he always abstained from whatever could cause an uprising among the people. When questioned by the cunning emissaries of the Sanhedrin, on the duty of paying tribute to Cæsar, he had categorically pronounced in favour of the tribute. The Messianic sovereignty, to which he was charged with aspiring, had nothing whatever in common with political domination.

Pilate returned to the Praetorium and called Jesus, and Jesus stood before the governor. The political aspect of the

question alone concerned the Roman. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he said. The question was ambiguous. In the Jewish sense Jesus was not a king, but in the spiritual sense he was. Jesus wished to clear up the matter.

"Sayest thou that of thyself?" he said, "or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate answered: "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" Jesus, finding that the governor was questioning him with sincerity, and, willing to enlighten him, answered: "My Kingdom is not of this world: if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my Kingdom not from hence." Pilate therefore said unto him, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus, having explained in what sense his Kingdom was to be understood, was at liberty to answer boldly, and without fear of equivocation: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Everyone that is of the Truth heareth my voice."

Never had cultured Roman heard from the mouth of the sage, his teacher, such words as those which Pilate heard in his Praetorium from the lips of Jesus. The genius of Rome which founded a universal empire upon force, sinks to nothing beside Jesus, who founded the empire of Truth on his own testimony, and on faith in his divine mission. The governor was not one of those of whom truth makes enthusiasts, and who appeal to her with beating hearts. He only asked, with sceptical indifference, "What is Truth?" and, without even waiting for an answer, being convinced that he saw before him but a dreamer or a sage, but assuredly not an ambitious man dangerous to the peace and laws of Caesar, he came out again, and said to the Jews, "I find in him no fault at all."

The most influential and determined of the leaders of the conspiracy then renewed in the presence of Pilate their charges against Jesus. All this discussion took place in the open air, in front of the palace. The Jews crowded around the foot of the flight of steps, while Pilate kept going to and fro between the hall of the Praetorium and the door of the vestibule, to question Jesus and to argue with the Jews. We know not the details of these new charges, but fanaticism

and hatred are full of treacherous expedients. Pilate came back to the accused, saying, "Dost thou not see that testimonies are multiplied against thee? Dost thou answer nothing? See how many charges they bring against thee."

Jesus answered him not a word. His silence astonished Pilate. The accusations of the Jews redoubled in vehemence. The governor's weakness and indifference exasperated them. They emphasized the political charge against Jesus, and, alluding to his triumphal entry into the city, they said: "He stirreth up the people throughout all Jewry, from Galilee even to this place." At the word Galilee, Pilate thought he had found a means of divesting himself of a matter which embarrassed him; he asked if Jesus was of that country, and, being told he was, he resolved to send him to Herod.

The tetrarch happened to be in Jerusalem for the festival, and his palace stood near the Praetorium. It would appear that a rupture had lately been caused between that prince and Pilate by the condemnation and execution of some Galilaeans. The opportunity of renewing their friendship was an excellent one in the eyes of Pilate. To invite Herod to try the cause of Jesus was to recognise his jurisdiction over Galilaeans, even in Judaea. Herod was flattered by this attention, and from that day forward Herod and Pilate were friends.

At the sight of Jesus the tetrarch gave manifest signs of great joy. For a long time he had wished to see him. He was a weak and superstitious man, and, having heard much concerning the Prophet of Galilee, he was reckoning upon seeing some prodigy. Jesus was to him only an object of curiosity, as the worker of miracles. He began to interrogate him, plying him with one question upon another. But Jesus did not lend himself to the caprices of Herod. In the presence of the murderer of John the Baptist he remained silent. The charges of the priests and scribes were again brought up against him; still he remained silent. His attitude had the effect of humiliating and wounding the prince, who avenged himself by expressions of contempt. All the courtiers joined in his disdain. Jesus, whom they had charged before him, as before Pilate, of making himself King, was arrayed in a gorgeously-coloured cloak, such as the Jewish kings were accustomed to wear on solemn occasions. Herod sent him

back, muffled in this mocking purple, to the Roman governor. Pilate was crestfallen; his plan to get the business off his hands had failed. He was driven to try a fresh manoeuvre.

He called together the chief priests, the authorities, and the people, and said to them: "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you Barabbas or the King of the Jews?"

Into what strange and cruel aberrations can a mere policy of expediency be led! It ends only in weakness, and injustice, and cowardice. If Jesus was not guilty why punish him? It is plain that Pilate was not anxious to defend the right, but that he only wished to divest himself of a troublesome business, and to induce the Jews to abandon their resolution of putting Jesus to death. He trusted to appease them by scourging his prisoner. But hatred is not thus satisfied. Either it must be muzzled or the blood for which it calls must be given it. In his criminal complaisance, the consequences of which he ought to have been able to foresee, Pilate, instead of saying, "I will deliver Jesus unto you," offered to the accusers to release the accused, and gave them the choice between the murderer, the worker of sedition, and the innocent man.

One of the Evangelists relates an incident which occurred while the matter was under discussion, to confirm the governor in his desire of saving Jesus. His wife, a woman of Gentile birth, sent to him to say: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this night in a dream because of him." The renown of Jesus, with which for several days Jerusalem had been filled, must have reached even to the palace of the governor. Nothing more probable can be imagined than the conduct of this woman, terrified in a dream by the cruel fate which threatened the Prophet. The murderous projects of the high Jewish dignitaries against Jesus were well known, and all who were not blinded by hatred must have pitied him.

The crowd, meanwhile, was thronging about the entrance to the Praetorium to ask, according to custom, the release of a criminal in honour of the feast. Their leaders had worked them into excitement, and provided them with the rallying cry. The governor repeated his question: Which of the twain shall I release unto you? Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? The multitude cried out: Away with him, and release unto us Barabbas. Pilate, desirous of saving Jesus, spoke to them again. A struggle was going on within his conscience between the voice of justice, which spoke for Jesus, and the voice of expediency, which recalled the fear of danger. Come, said he, I will now release unto you the King of the Jews.

The crowd, observing the pusillanimity and hesitation of Pilate, cried out again: Not this man, but Barabbas. Pilate answered them: And what then shall I do with Jesus, the King of the Jews? The Roman governor, the armed representative of law, was no longer giving orders, but rather seemed to be receiving them. He did not insist upon the law which it was his duty to defend, but consulted the caprices of an excited crowd; and he knew that they were the caprices of envy and hatred.

He had not long to wait. A shout was raised of, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate still attempted to appease the passions which he had let loose; he pleaded the cause of Jesus; he who should have cut short all pleading. "What evil hath he done?" he said. "I find in him no cause of death. I will therefore chastise him and let him go." The cries of the multitude were redoubled. The chief priests themselves joined their voices to those of the people, and the cries became louder and louder, Let him be crucified.

Then Pilate, seeing he did not succeed and that the tumult only grew the greater, was afraid. He had raised the storm, and now the storm terrified him. He had some water brought to him, and, washing his hands before the people, said, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. On your heads be his blood. And the whole multitude replied: His blood be on us and on our children.

The washing of his hands did not absolve Pilate. The blood of Jesus, which fell as a curse on those who shed it and on their children, dyed the hands of Pilate, and its stain is ineffaceable.

After having protested his innocence, the governor yielded. They asked for the release of Barabbas; he released unto them the rebel, the murderer, the robber, and delivered Jesus to their will.

It would seem that Pilate still entertained the vain hope of saving Jesus. Circumspect as he was, he yet counted on the pity of the mob. The governor had yet to learn that the mob, when once it is carried away by political or religious passion, is a savage thing, knowing no pity, and as implacable and destructive as a wild beast.

He caused Jesus to be seized, and gave him up to the soldiers to be scourged. This was the fate of those about to be crucified. Jesus was bound by the hands to a pillar, according to the Roman custom, with his back bowed down, while the executioner, armed with a whip of thongs, the ends of which bore pieces of bone or lead, struck him with redoubled energy. This horrible torture was one which the sufferer did not always survive. After the first strokes the flesh was torn and the blood gushed forth. Jesus bore it without a murmur. Then the attendants led him into the inner court and all the soldiers of the guard were summoned to the Praetorium. They stripped him of his garments and threw over his shoulders a purple robe. They made a crown of thorns, which was placed upon his head; and put a reed into his hand in mockery of a sceptre. They approached him and bowed derisively, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" He was buffeted, and struck on the head with the reed. They spat upon him, and bent the knee before him.

What caprice of cruelty were these soldiers obeying? Why this detestable and vulgar mockery? The Roman soldiers entertained an intense hatred of the Jews, and the condemned man who was delivered to them was made the victim of this hatred. But there was let loose against Jesus such an array of the powers of evil that their secret suggestions can alone account for such horrors. It is impossible to suspect any detail of these atrocities. Those who relate them appear to have seen them with their eyes; for no one but the actual witness of an event could paint it in such vivid colours.

Pilate, going before Jesus, came out once again to the threshold of the palace. I bring him unto you, he said;

know, therefore, that I have found no fault in him; and immediately Jesus appeared, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate pointed to him, saying: "Behold the man!" In this phrase were mingled pity and sarcasm; pity for Jesus, whose appearance was most heart-rending; and sarcasm against the Jews, who could yet be enraged against a victim reduced to this pitiable condition.

When the chief priests and the guardians of the Temple saw Jesus their hatred burst forth. "Crucify him, crucify him," they cried out unto Pilate. The governor, seeing that his cruel expedient was as much a failure as the rest, seemed to object for the last time to making himself the instrument of these fanatics. "Take him yourselves," he said impatiently, "and crucify him; as for me, I find no fault in him." The Jews appealed to their Law.[1] We have seen how unjustly they could interpret it. According to our Law, they said, he must die, for he has made himself the Son of God. Then they called on Pilate to put the law into force.

When Pilate heard the words, "Son of God," a vague fear seized him. The prisoner who stood before him was no ordinary, perhaps he was even a divine, being. On the other hand, the fanaticism of the Jews increased his embarrassment. He knew that this excitable people was capable of anything when their Law was in question. In trouble and perplexity he went back to the Praetorium with Jesus, and meditating on the name of "Son of God," which had taken possession of his mind, but which he could only half understand, veiled as it was to him by heathen prejudices, he said unto him, as if wishing to discover the secret of his birth: Whence comest thou? Jesus made no answer. Pilate, offended at his silence, thought to intimidate him. Dost thou speak nothing to me, thy judge? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? "Thou wouldst have no power over me except it had been given thee from on high; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

This reply of Jesus contains the only thing that can be urged in palliation of Pilate's conduct. It moved the governor, who tried for the last time to save his prisoner. But the cries of the Jews arose at once: If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. And coming back to the political charge so

[1] Levit. xxiv. 16.

falsely brought against Jesus, they added the perfidious phrase, "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."

Pilate no longer attempted to resist. He led Jesus outside the palace, to the place called Gabbatha; and he sat upon the judgment seat and said unto the Jews: "Behold your King." Away with him, crucify him, cried the Jews with one voice. Shall I crucify your King? answered Pilate. We have no king but Caesar, they returned. Pilate remained silent. In this struggle between religious fanaticism and expediency, which had for its object none other than the Son of God, Pilate allowed himself to be vanquished, and on Friday, between nine o'clock and noonday, delivered Jesus to the Jews to be crucified.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JESUS

Death on the cross was a punishment unknown to Jewish law, although it prescribed, in the case of great crimes, the hanging of the dead body from a gibbet. The Jews did not crucify, they stoned to death ; and the only one among their rulers, Alexander Jannaeus, one of the latest Asmonaeans, who attempted to institute the practice, reserved it for the case of prisoners of war. But the custom existed among all the other nations of antiquity : Egyptians, Persians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans. Among these latter, all citizens condemned to death were put to the sword, while slaves, insurrectionists, and great criminals were crucified. In the provinces of the Empire the cross was the form of punishment which was used by prefects and governors. In Syria and Judaea, Jews were crucified by thousands.

The cross had the greatest terrors for them ; it had become proverbial as the emblem of suffering and ignominy. The sufferer lived a long time, generally a whole day, and sometimes two ; he was stripped naked, and then bound or nailed by his hands and feet to the gibbet, which consisted of two tree-trunks, usually crossed in the form of the letter T. The whole body was suspended by the hands in a state of extreme tension, the open wounds in which were torn still more widely open under the weight. The blood trickled drop by drop from the punctures made by the nails. Thus hanging motionless, consumed by fever and burning thirst, but still retaining self-consciousness, the crucified man could watch himself slowly dying. Sometimes it became necessary to put an end to him, and the executioner then broke his limbs. An insulting crowd looked on at his agony, and could gloat over his cries and bitter anguish. Never did the cruelty of man conceive anything more horrible than this punishment, in which atrocity was combined with protraction and infamy.

The Jews demanded of Pilate that this punishment should

be inflicted upon Jesus. The hatred which had inspired them with the cry of "Crucify him," could have been assuaged by no other punishment. It was ordained that the Man of Sorrow should die on the cross.

The soldiers stripped Jesus of the purple robe in which they had enveloped him, and clothed him in his own garments. The accused descended the steps of the Praetorium, and, according to the prescribed custom, bare his own cross. Two malefactors walked beside him destined for the same punishment. Perhaps Pilate wished to heap one more insult upon the Jews by giving these two men as companions in misfortune to him whom they had so rancorously accused of proclaiming himself their King. It is a better explanation of his conduct to see in it the fulfilment of the designs of Providence. The divine anger was let loose upon Jesus. Every circumstance combined to aggravate the ignominy of his death. The well-beloved Son of the Father had become the Victim for the sins of mankind; and he was treated without mercy.

Since the morning, the news of the trial and conviction must have been spread abroad, so that the disciples and friends of the Master had been able to follow every incident of the awful drama. The mob surged around the precincts of the Praetorium. The melancholy procession set out upon its journey, the prisoner being guarded by an escort of soldiers armed with lances, and commanded by a centurion.

The road to Calvary was almost the same as that which, to this day, the Christians of Jerusalem know by the name of the "Way of Sorrow"; it passes through the lower town, or Acra, crosses the lower street, called by Josephus the Valley of Tyropoeon, which separates Acra from Gareb, and then rises in a rather steep slope up to the gate of Ephraim.

When Jesus had advanced a few paces he broke down under his burthen. Among the crowd which had assembled along the road to execution he perceived his mother. Only a look was exchanged between the mother and son. Soon after this, the procession met a man named Simon, of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and the soldiers charged with the execution stopped him, and compelled him to carry the cross of Jesus. It is probable that the Master, exhausted by the torture of the scourging, was beginning to faint by the way,

and we may well believe that the Libyan had boldly manifested his sympathy with the condemned man, and that, when ordered by the guards to assist Jesus, he did not hesitate to take the heavy cross upon his shoulders. The memory of this man, accidentally as he was associated with the punishment of the Saviour, is still blessed. The cross which he carried for those few moments saved himself and his family. He became, as did his wife and two sons, Rufus and Alexander, a faithful and revered disciple.

A woman must be mentioned here, whose memory, although the Evangelists have omitted to speak of her, is still venerated by the Christian world. This woman was Veronica, who, when she saw Jesus pass before her house, with his forehead covered in blood and dust, drew near, and, exposed as she was to the insults of his revilers, wiped his face with a veil. She, with Simon the Cyrenian, are typical of those who have the courage to show their compassion for those beings who, like Jesus, are abandoned and abhorred by all.

As they advanced towards Calvary, the condemned men heard behind them the voice of weeping and lamentation. A great pity was rising in the hearts of the crowd, especially among the women, towards whom Jesus turned and said :

" Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? "

Jesus here forgot his own sorrows, and returned pity for pity. In spite of the overwhelming suffering to which he had already succumbed, his thoughts were with the people who had made him their victim, and who were about to put him to death, and he warned them of the hideous calamities that were impending over them. He himself was represented by the green and living tree, the nation which had spurned him by the dead and withered one. If an innocent man, falsely accused of blasphemy and rebellion against Gentile authority, was treated thus, how should that criminal and rebellious nation be treated, when, after endeavouring to break the yoke, it should be handed over for destruction to the fire and sword

of the Romans? These things were ordained by the vengeance of God, and none could arrest their coming. One alone could have done so, and him, in their blind hatred, they were about to kill.

At length the procession reached Calvary. The three crosses were erected. Before nailing the prisoners upon them, they gave them the stupefying drink which was given as an opiate to those who were about to die. It was a kind of aromatic wine, mingled with frankincense and myrrh, sour and bitter to the taste. Jesus tasted the draught, as if to acknowledge the attention of those who offered it, but he would not drink it. He was resolved to suffer with unclouded consciousness all the agonies of the death-torture. The distance from the Praetorium to Calvary is scarcely a thousand paces, and the way of sorrow had been traversed in less than an hour.

About midday, at the sixth hour, Jesus was crucified, and with him the two thieves; one at his right hand, and the other at his left.

When raised on the cross he prayed for his executioners; his first word was one of pardon. He said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

When the condemned had been raised aloft on the cross, the executioners, after their horrible work of crucifixion, used to fix upon the gibbet, above the head of every sufferer, a scroll indicating his crime, according to Roman custom.[1] That of Jesus bore these simple words: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." They were written in three languages: Hebrew, which was the national tongue; Greek, the universal language of the time; and Latin, the language of the conquerors. All men could read the name and the crime of Jesus. Pilate, as ironical as ever towards those who had wrung from him the condemnation of the Prophet, mocked them for the last time by proclaiming Jesus their King, thus involuntarily and unconsciously acting as the instrument of God in his inscrutable purposes concerning his Son. King of the Jews he was indeed, not in Pilate's sense of the title, but by the cross on which he died, and by the blood which flowed from his wounded limbs. The true Jews, the true sons

[1] The condemned prisoner had to carry his scroll on his way to execution.

of Abraham, throughout the whole world, recognised him from that moment as their Saviour and their Master. It was through suffering that he attained his Kingdom.

When the Jews, who had assembled round Calvary, saw their victim, with the scroll above his head in which he was called their King, they comprehended the insult of Pilate, and were filled with indignation at it. The priests who were present at the place of death wished to modify the inscription which was so offensive to them. They sent to Pilate, saying, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews."

The governor, whose pusillanimity and weakness and cowardice they had worked on before, was now inflexible. He knew how to be so when necessary, even to the point of cruelty, against this vanquished and intractable nation; and this makes it all the more unpardonable in him to have delivered up Jesus. He answered contemptuously: What I have written I have written.

In the meanwhile the executioners were engaged at the foot of the cross in sharing between themselves the clothes of the victims, to which they were entitled by the Roman law, "*De bonis damnatorum.*" The four executioners of Jesus accordingly took possession of his garments, that is, his taleth, girdle, cloak, coat, and shoes. They divided the cloak into four parts, but, as the coat was without seam and of a single piece, woven from the top throughout, they said, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. They did as they had said, and then, sitting down by the cross, they kept guard on the victims. These soldiers did not imagine that they were, like Pilate, the instruments in the hand of God, and that they were fulfilling the words of the prophet concerning Jesus, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots."

The multitude looked on. Those who passed by insulted Jesus, and shook their heads at him and blasphemed him, provoking him with pitiless irony, and saying: "Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." We recognise here the voices of the false witnesses who had accused him before Caiaphas. Men of such low

condition are always vulgar, always brutal and cowardly in their cruelty. The more stricken and helpless is he whom they are persecuting, the more provoking and the more hateful do they become.

But not even their leaders could forego the fiendish delight of satisfied hatred. Chief priests, scribes, and elders mingled their sarcasms and their insults with the cries of their satellites. They talked among themselves, laughing to scorn the miracle-worker, the pretended Messiah and Son of God, his goodness towards man, and his faith in his Father, and saying : "He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him : for he said, I am the Son of God."

These men, the judges who had condemned and led Jesus forth to death, had no restraint in their brutal triumph ; they continued to insult him even unto death. It was as it were a pestilence of hate and insult raging round the Victim.

The Roman soldiers also mocked him, with ironical allusions to the writing fixed above his head. "If thou be the King of the Jews," they said, "save thyself." Then they poured out a cup of their drink, and offered it to him.

And lastly, one of the two malefactors crucified with Jesus added yet another blasphemy to all that had gone before, and said, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself, and us with thee." But the other answering rebuked him, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss." We feel at once that the soul of this condemned criminal had been won over to Jesus ; he repented and believed. All who are influenced by Jesus enter into repentance and faith. His meekness, his resignation, his prayer for pardon, the word "Father," addressed by him to God, with such an accent as none other could approach, all this had enlightened the mind of the malefactor. The mysteries of the conscience, and the hidden ways in which God's love saves it are beyond man's finding out. This malefactor found life upon a gibbet, but he was side by side with the Saviour.

He said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom." He felt the reality of that title of King for which Jesus was dying. His trust won for him

one of the most consoling phrases which fell from the lips of the Crucified One : " Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."[1]

Then ensued an affecting scene, described for us by one who not only witnessed it, but was one of the chief actors in it. Among the mixed multitude of the indifferent, curious and hostile which was gathered around the sufferers were the parents of Jesus, with his disciples, his fellow-countrymen of Galilee, and the women who had followed him. His mother herself was there. She now approached the cross, accompanied by John, the other Mary, her sister-in-law, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw them standing at his feet ; the disciple whom he loved being next beside his mother. He said unto his mother, " Woman, behold thy son ! " and then to John, " Behold thy mother ! "

Even to his last breath he forgot his own sufferings to console others ; to his friend he gave a mother, and to his mother he gave a son. But this was not only the last word of a son watchful of the future of her whom he was about to leave for ever, and of a friend to his friend ; the words of Jesus have a higher meaning. The beloved disciple represents to him the whole Church ; the whole assembly of his faithful followers and friends. When he said to his mother, " Behold thy son ! " he created in her a divine motherhood ; he associated her in the work of Redemption. By resigning herself to the will of God, which required of her the sacrifice of her Son, this heroic woman, unrivalled in the history of mankind, became one of the founders of universal salvation. She continues her work invisibly by her maternal office in the Church. All who follow Jesus are her sons ; and those who love Jesus follow the example of John, and take her for their mother.

Soon after, darkness began to cover the earth. The sun was darkened. About three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? "

[1] The word " Paradise " is originally Persian, and means " a park." In its Hebrew form, *Pardes*, it is used to signify " a royal garden " (Song of Solomon iv. 13 ; Eccl. ii. 5.) Παράδεισος in the Septuagint is the Garded of Eden (*Gan-Eden*), and, in an allegorical sense, the heavenly place into which the souls of the just shall be received. Such is the interpretation given by the Talmuds and the commentators. (*Chag.*, fol. 14, 2 ; *Midrasch, Tillm.*, fol. 2, 3. Cf. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebr. et Talmud*, p. 890, ed. Leipzig.)

This was no cry of despair ; it was a cry of supreme anguish. The bond between Jesus and his Father is indissoluble ; they are one and the same. The Father can no more abandon the soul of his Son, than the conscience of Jesus can close itself against the love of the Father. But it was in the purposes of God that his Son should be given over defenceless to all forms of insult and torture, to every stroke that the hatred of his enemies could launch against him. In the midst of this deluge of agony into which he was plunged, it seems to have been willed by the mysterious designs of God, and in order that the Victim of Calvary should drain to the uttermost the cup of human suffering, that Jesus should no longer feel the joy of his union with his Father. The union was not broken, it could not be broken ; but, although still conscious of it, he had lost enjoyment of it. Hence the agonising cry : " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? "

These words are the beginning of a psalm filled with complaints of which Jesus alone has known and experienced the anguish ; a psalm in which all the horror of his sufferings is presented to us in the garb of prophecy :

" I am a worm, and no man ; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn. . . . Many bulls have compassed me : strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint : my heart is like wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd ; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me ; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me : they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones : they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord : O my strength, haste thee to help me."

The cry of Jesus, " Eloi, Eloi," was received with sarcasm. Some of them that stood there, said, " This man calleth for Elias."[1]

[1] This misunderstanding is a proof that, among the pilgrims who flocked to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, were some Greeks and Romans who knew neither Hebrew, Aramaean, nor Syro-Chaldaic.

The horrible torture of crucifixion, and the raging fever which consumed its victims, wrung from Jesus the cry: "I thirst." It was the custom to place beside the sufferers a vessel filled with vinegar. One of the soldiers ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon a branch of hyssop, and put it to his lips, saying, "Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to save him." When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished."

The cup which he was destined to drink was drained to the dregs. He had touched the bottom of that awful abyss into which he had been cast by the will of his Father. He had suffered all and atoned for all. The suffering was without limit, the victim perfect, the satisfaction infinite. The wrath of God against evil was appeased, sin was destroyed, and reconciliation between God and man was sealed in him in infinite love.

Then he cried out in a loud voice for the second and last time. When a man is about to die he grows faint and submits to death; but Jesus was the master of death. He leaves it to fulfil its work, giving up his life in the fulness of his liberty and sovereignty, as he shall take it again.

"Father," he said, "into thy hands I commend my spirit." He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. It was now the ninth hour.[1]

The darkness had grown denser, as though by an eclipse of the sun. The great veil which hung in the Temple, at the entrance to the Holy of Holies, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were rent, graves opened of themselves, and the bodies of the saints that slept in them arose.

These miraculous phenomena, witnessed only in Palestine and Judaea, reveal how powerful are the ties uniting Jesus with nature, with heaven and earth, and with mankind. The sun by its eclipse, and the earth by its quaking, took their part in the sadness of this dreadful hour. The death of the Crucified was at once the end and beginning of a world. The old world was vanquished; the dawn of a new world was about to rise. The sacred veil which hid the impenetrable dwelling of God was rent asunder. Mosaism, the law of the elements

[1] According to our reckoning, three o'clock in the afternoon.

of the world, as St. Paul calls it, had passed away. The Temple was destroyed.

The Victim who then expired will lead us by his blood into the true Holy of Holies, of which that other is but a symbol. The dead themselves shall hear his voice; its living power shall overflow all things; the graves shall be opened, and those who sleep therein shall arise.

When these heavenly signs appeared, the crowd of those who had been present at the execution, and whose cries and mockeries and insults have been recorded, were seized with panic. They dispersed in terror, many of them, as they went, smiting their breasts with anguish.

The earthquake, the strange and sudden darkness, the rocks which were cleft asunder, the loud cry uttered by Jesus as he died, made a deep impression on the centurion and the soldiers, who were watching over Jesus. Heathens as they were, their consciences were stirred within them. Their souls opened like the graves, and were cleft like the rocks whose hardness they had so lately rivalled. The centurion standing before the cross glorified God, saying, Truly, this was a righteous man and the Son of God. It was Justice that spoke by the mouth of this Roman. The death of Jesus at once inaugurates his glory and draws all men towards him. It moved a Gentile to be the first to confess his divinity. The tone in which Jesus called on God, as Father, was sufficient to convince him. He believed in the Crucified, and said, Verily he was the Son of God.

While the multitude withdrew, a small group remained, gazing motionless, at some distance from the cross on which Jesus had just expired. These were his friends, and especially the many women who had followed him from Galilee and had placed their services and their goods at his disposal. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joseph, and Salome the mother of the two sons of Zebedee. They looked and waited in silent grief.

The Sabbath was nigh at hand. The Jews, who did not wish the bodies to remain on the cross during the holy day, entreated Pilate that the limbs should be broken and that the bodies should be taken away. The Romans generally left the bodies on the cross to become the prey of wild beasts,

The Jewish law required that they should be removed before sunset, lest the earth should be defiled by the curse attaching to a corpse. The *crurifragium*, however, as the Romans called it, was resorted to by them in exceptional cases, and this fact at once explains the request of the Jews and Pilate's reply.

Soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and then of the other who had been crucified with Jesus ; but when they saw that Jesus was dead already, they did not break his legs. But one of them with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water. This marvel was witnessed by St. John, who is the only Evangelist by whom it is related. " He saw it," he says, " and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true."

The thrust of the soldier's lance was meant as a last insult to the lifeless body. But the pierced side is an irrefutable proof of the death of Jesus ; it realised a prophecy which had foretold to the Jews that the Messiah should be pierced by a lance, and it was most fitting to him whose love has saved the world. The blood and water which flowed from him are symbolical of the deepest mysteries. We read in Genesis how from the ribs of Adam, as he slept, Jehovah drew forth Eve, the mother of all living. The real Adam, upon whom a deep sleep had fallen, was Jesus upon the cross. From his open side issued the Church, the true Mother, who brings forth to God all the living by the water of baptism and the blood of the Eucharist.

Those who were condemned by the Sanhedrin were to be interred without ceremony. They might not be mourned ; their dust might not be mingled with that of their ancestors in the family sepulchre. They were borne to the sepulchre officially set apart for the bodies of criminals who had been executed. Sometimes, however, on the occasion of a festival they were given up to their relatives, to be buried with an absence of all pomp.

But the friends of Jesus did not forget him in death. There was one among them who especially distinguished himself in this hour of mourning. He was a rich man, a member of the Sanhedrin, a native of the small town of Arimathea, in Judaea. His name was Joseph. He was a just and good man, who was waiting for the Kingdom of God ; he was in

secret a disciple of Jesus. He had taken no part in the late deliberations and proceedings of the High Council. With fearless courage he went to Pilate and asked him for permission to remove the body of Jesus for the purpose of interment. The governor was surprised to hear that he had died so soon, and having made sure of this through the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

Joseph immediately purchased the winding-sheet and came to Calvary, accompanied by another secret disciple of Jesus named Nicodemus. The latter took with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about one hundred pounds weight. They took down the body from the cross and embalmed it in the usual manner. It was wrapped in a wind-sheet sprinkled with an aromatic and perfumed liquid; and the limbs were then swathed in bands steeped in the mixture of myrrh and aloes. The head was covered with a linen cloth, which was folded about it and concealed the face.

Joseph of Arimathaea owned a garden close to Calvary, the place in which Jesus had been crucified, and there he had hewn out of the living rock a sepulchre in which no one had hitherto been laid. Like most other Jewish sepulchres, as they may still be seen, it was composed of two chambers, the first to serve as a funeral chamber where the friends came to weep; the second to receive the bodies. The sepulchre properly so called was a shallow couch hewn out of the solid rock and surmounted by a small arch. In such a tomb the body of Jesus was laid. The sun was setting, and with sunset the Sabbath began. A large stone, shaped like a millstone, and made to move to and fro in a groove of the rock, served as an entrance to the sepulchral monument. It was rolled to the opening, and the friends of Jesus who had buried him withdrew.

Faithful to their Master unto death, the holy women who had followed him had not left him from the moment when he had breathed his last. Mary Magdalene stands at the head of this company of mourners. They had seen the Master in his agony and death-throes; then they had seen him taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. Their grief and their tears made a fitting accompaniment to the melancholy task of Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. They observed how the body of Jesus was disposed, and withdrew to prepare for the buried one whom they adored fresh perfumes and

fresh spices, and to pass the Sabbath day in silent sadness.

But the chief priests and Pharisees were disturbed in mind. The thought of the victim no longer aroused their hatred. After his death they believed themselves sure of triumph. They had not a suspicion that death ends nothing. Ideas, truth, right, justice are beyond its reach; and even though he who was the incarnation of all these divine things had given himself up to death, death was not to be the end of all. Fearing on the part of the disciples a fraud such as none but hypocrites and rogues could have imagined, they went to Pilate, saying: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead." The error of believing in one risen from the dead would be yet worse than that other error of believing in a Son of God. Pilate refused, saying: "Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as ye can." So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone with the seal of the Sanhedrin, and setting a watch of their satellites at the entrance. Jesus slept for a little while the sleep of death under the guard of his executioners.

## CHAPTER XLI

### JESUS RISEN FROM THE DEAD

THE story of a great man ends at his grave. He enters by death into an invisible world which is closed aganist us. We see him no more ; we hear him no more. All that survives of him, besides his memory, is his disciples, his teachings, his institutions, his works, and the secret working of his immortal spirit. But just as the birth of Jesus bears no resemblance to ours, so neither does his death resemble our death.

The Sabbath was drawing towards its close. The holy-women, those faithful servants of Jesus, weeping over their buried Master, had no other thought but that of honouring him in death. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, returned to Golgotha to view the sepulchre, and then, after the sun was set, bought some perfumes, which they purposed to sprinkle over the body of Jesus.

On the morrow, at the first hour, that is before daybreak, they went forth from Bethany, taking the road to Golgotha, and bringing with them the perfumes which they had prepared the evening before. On the way they said one to another, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ? None of them had the least conception of the extraordinary event which had taken place at the very moment when they had set out from Bethany.

Suddenly there had been a great earthquake. One of the heavenly powers, an angel of God, as the Gospel says, had come down from heaven, had rolled the stone away from the entrance, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. When the guards had seen him, they had fallen as if dead with fear, and as soon as they had come to themselves they had fled.

The sun was risen by the time that the women reached Golgotha ; and as they gazed upon the tomb they saw that it was open ; the huge stone had been thrust aside. When Mary

Magdalene saw this, she thought that the body of her Master had been carried away by sacrilegious hands, and whilst her companions went into the tomb, which they found empty, Mary Magdalene went to Simon Peter and John, the favourite disciple of Jesus, and said to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter and John immediately went forth and came to the sepulchre. They did not walk, they ran, to use the expression of one of them, St. John himself, by whom the event has been recorded. He was the first to arrive, and, stooping down at the opening of the cave, he saw the linen clothes lying, but he went not in. Peter, who was following him, entered boldly, and saw the linen clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin that had been about the head of Jesus, not lying with the winding-sheet, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then John went with Peter into the tomb, and believed what Mary Magdalene had said to him, that the Master had been taken away. The thought of the resurrection of Jesus, and that too a resurrection of the flesh, did not enter their minds. For they did not as yet know that it should be, as the Evangelist declares; and, although they had heard the Master on several occasions announce it in express terms, they did not understand it. They viewed it through the mists of their own religious prejudices, and must have confounded it with the coming of the Messiah in the majesty and splendour of his Kingdom. Accordingly, after having visited the sepulchre, they returned in sorrow and disappointment to their homes.

The women, in grief and sadness, wandered about the garden. Mary stood at the entrance to the cave, and wept: and as she stooped down to see the place where Jesus had lain, she beheld two angels in human form, clothed in white, the one at the head and the other at the foot of the niche where the body had been lain. "Woman," they said unto her, "why weepest thou? She answered: They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." As she said these words she turned, looking for him with eyes full of tears, and saw Jesus standing, but knew him not. "Woman," he said, "why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast

laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said unto her, "Mary." At this well-known appeal she knew her Master. "My Master," she answered, and threw herself at his feet to kiss them, as she had done in his life. "Touch me not," said Jesus, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

These mysterious words were intended for a warning to Magdalene that the hour was not yet come to enjoy the divine presence of her Master in his transfigured humanity. He re-appears on earth only to leave it again. He has not yet reached the place of immortality; he is ascending to his Father in his Kingdom of glory. It is there that absolute communion with him shall be realised in never-ending duration, and in joyful ecstasies with which no earthly trouble shall be mingled. Meantime he confides to the best-beloved of his servants the message of that ineffable communion which Jesus invites all his faithful followers, his brothers, as he calls them, to partake in heaven.

No one was worthier than the Magdalene to be the messenger of Jesus. A woman was the first to see him risen from the dead, to hear his voice, and to understand why the tomb was empty. The body of the buried Lord had not been taken away. The all-powerful might of God, operating through the invisible beings who are his messengers, had made the earth quake and rolled aside the stone which closed the entrance to the sepulchre, and the Crucified had risen up to life, triumphant and glorious. His body, which was not destined to undergo decomposition in the tomb, he had made to live again. Henceforward he lives and can no more suffer death.

The few privileged beings to whom he showed himself during those days, were enabled, as they gazed upon the heavenly vision, to learn the true destiny of man. All that they see, they feel, they hear, is of the invisible world. All the glory of Jesus, master of death, raised to enter into a perfect and immortal life, will become the heritage of everyone who believes in him.

While Mary Magdalene had gone to inform the disciples of Jesus, some of the women who had come to the sepulchre and had been frightened by the disappearance of the body, having approached the tomb, saw all at once close to them

two angels in the form of men, clad in shining garments. "And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful man, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words. And the angels added: Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and ran to bring his disciples word. And suddenly Jesus showed himself before them, and said to them, "All hail." When they saw him they fell down, and kissed his feet; and he said, "Be not afraid; go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." The story of Magdalene and of her companions was received with incredulity by the disciples. It seemed to them "as idle tales," says one Evangelist. Peter, however, arose, and ran once more to Golgotha, and, entering into the sepulchre, stooped down over the tomb, and saw the linen clothes still laid on the ground, and nothing more. Perhaps he may have hoped to see his Master; he departed, wondering in himself at what was come to pass.

One fact stands predominant during the week which followed the death of Jesus, namely, the sorrow and dejection of the disciples, and even of those we call the Eleven, who up to the last had been admitted to the closest friendship with the Master, and had made such vehement protestations of their fidelity. That God should so keep silence in presence of the condemnation and death of Jesus was an overwhelming grief to them. They had expected to behold some striking manifestation of divine power and glory, which should confound the enemies of their Master, and inaugurate his Messianic Kingdom. But they had found nothing; nothing but an empty tomb, and the statements of women who declared they had seen angels in the sepulchre, and afterwards Christ himself.

To overcome the obstinacy of the Eleven and give them courage, they must be convinced of the resurrection; and to convince them, nothing less than the intervention of their

risen Master was necessary, disclosing himself to them again and again, in all the reality of his bodily presence and glorious life. Nothing would convince them but his presence and his acts. They were to behold and to touch Jesus, and to hear his voice; and the resurrection would become to them no longer a matter of faith, but an evident fact. They would know henceforward that the Holy One of God had not been given up to the corruption of death; that God had rescued him from the power of his enemies; that he was about to enter into his glory, and to inaugurate in person his Messianic Kingdom.

The awe-inspiring events of the Resurrection morning were quickly known in the city. Some of the soldiers who had been on guard hastened thither to inform the chief priests and the Sanhedrin of what had happened. A special assembly was held. The Sadducees, sceptical as ever, were but little impressed by the recital. The resurrection had no place in their philosophy. The notion, that a man could rise again from the dead, must have seemed to them to be no better than a chimera. But with all their philosophy there were some things they little dreamed of; the risen Lord was to be a glorious conqueror. They only thought of their own immediate interests, and, following out to the end their policy of intrigue and hate, resolved upon bribing the soldiers to give out a complete travesty of their former story. They ordered them to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears," they added, "we will persuade him, and secure you."

The soldiers fulfilled their instructions to the letter, and the fable was so given out among all the Jews. It was still in circulation ten years after, when the Evangelist who relates the event was compiling his memoirs. But truth will not allow herself to be tricked out by human malice in the garb of falsehood. The prodigious labours of the Risen One have borne witness to him, and no unprejudiced historian can base the religion of Jesus on the intrigues of a few Sadducees and the venality of a few soldiers.

No better illustration could be given of the state of mind of the disciples of Jesus in those days that followed his death and that which beheld his resurrection, than the following

event, narrated by St. Luke with such exactness of detail and such true pathos, that some have supposed, not without good reason, that he himself was an actor in it.

It was the evening of the day of the resurrection. Two of the disciples were on their way to a suburb of Nicopolis, called Emmaus, one hundred and sixty furlongs distance from Jerusalem. As they walked, they talked together of all those things which had happened: "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him."

The glorious body of Jesus, although most real, is of such a nature as is beyond the power of science to appreciate. It shares in the power of the Spirit. It can appear and disappear, hide itself or render itself visible, modify and change its form. As he approached the two travellers he appeared to them to be one of the many foreign pilgrims who had come to the Holy City for the festival.

"And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,"

as he was wont to do to his disciples. "And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he, though a guest in a strange house, but making himself as it were the chief among them, took bread, and blessed it, according to custom, and brake, and gave to them, and their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

This transient sight of him was sufficient for their faith; and they believed henceforward in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. This discourse which had so absorbed them on the journey now came back vividly to the minds of the disciples, and they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, being eager to tell to their companions what things they had seen and heard.

It would seem that some of those whom they met could not believe their statements. This new feature shows how obstinately faith in the resurrection was at first resisted by the disciples. But the risen Jesus was watching over his own; by his appearances to them he wished to enlighten them, leading them little by little to the truth, and at last revealing to them the full mystery of his triumph. On the evening of this same day he had shown himself to Peter. The details of this appearance are not known. St. Luke and St. Paul refer to it, but without comment.

When the two travellers from Emmaus arrived at Jerusalem, they found the Eleven gathered together, and other disciples with them. They were speaking of the resurrection, and some said, The Lord is risen indeed, and Peter has seen him. The testimony of Peter does not seem, however, to have had any decisive influence upon them. They listened to the statement of Cleophas and his companion, who told them of the conversation on their journey, and how they had recognised Jesus by his manner of breaking bread at the table at which he was seated with them. But even this new testimony was not sufficient to dispel all their doubts.

It was now grown late. The doors of the house in which the disciples had assembled were closed, for fear of the Jews.

While the two disciples were still speaking together, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you; it is I, be not afraid." At this sudden and miraculous appearance they were terrified and troubled, thinking that they saw a spirit.

But Jesus reassured them, saying: "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Then he drew near to them, and showed them his wounds, saying, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

The disciples had found their dearly-beloved Master again. They saw him, they touched him, and their joy overflowed. They could not believe their happiness. The human heart is so constituted that its hopes are but coward hopes, and whatever happiness comes beyond their range is only disquieting to it; so, likewise, it will believe more readily in evil than in good. Jesus wished to root them firmly in the faith, and to break them of their timidity in believing; he said to them, "Have ye anything to eat?" They offered him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. He took and ate them in their presence, and, taking what was left, he gave it unto them.

The body of the risen Jesus was therefore a living and organic body. There is no idle fantasy about this scene; all is real. He ate, although eating has not to serve for the nourishment of one who is now and henceforward free from the laws of animal nature.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He intimates to them that his visible presence is of short duration, and that they are to be his representatives and his messengers in the world. The authority which is given him from the Father, the mission which the Father has entrusted unto him, terminates in his death and resurrection, and he is about to hand it over to them. This power and this function may be summed up in a few words: to communicate the Spirit of God and to forgive the sins of every man willing to open his heart to their teaching in repentance and faith. At this moment, and in order to express by a striking symbol what he would reveal to them, he breathed upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This is the second of the divine powers granted to the apostles. Before his death Jesus had given them, at the last supper, the power to renew and perpetuate, under the form of bread and wine, the sacrifice of the eternal Victim; but on this other evening he breathed upon them the breath of the Holy Spirit, and he conferred on them the power of sanctifying souls, and of forgiving sins through the Spirit.

This manifestation had a convincing effect on his disciples; their incredulity was vanquished, their agitation was allayed, and they said to one another, "We have seen the Lord."

The resurrection became for every witness of this divine scene a visible and palpable fact. God, however, had ordained that one of the Eleven, Thomas, the most positive-minded of all the small community, should be absent from it. When the others came and said to him, "We have seen the Lord: he revealed himself fully unto us," he answered them, saying, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Many a man will recognise himself in the figure of this exacting apostle. He brushes aside the testimony of his companions; he will trust no one but himself and his Master; if the others have seen, he will also see, for except he see he will not believe.

This unbelieving one was quickly to be convinced, for it was the Saviour's will that his flock should be in the full unity of faith. A new manifestation, eight days after that which resulted in the conviction of the Eleven, made the work complete. They were all once more assembled in a house together, with closed doors, Thomas with them. Although no door was open Jesus appeared and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." Since he had risen from the tomb peace seemed to be overflowing from him. Then said he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." He was now enlightened, looked on his risen Lord, and confessed his Godhead.

Then Jesus, speaking of all those who, throughout the future, should be tempted, like Thomas, to deny the authentic testimony and teaching of his apostles, said to Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:

blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The rationalist school, when brought face to face with such evidence on the subject of the resurrection and the appearances of Jesus, replies by raising the question of the credibility of miracles.

Nothing, indeed, can be a greater miracle than this. But none has been more solemnly and more rigidly attested. It rests, not upon the assertion of a woman, nor of women alone, but of men, and men in hundreds. What they assert they certify that they have seen, again and yet again ; and themselves record that they could not believe it unless it were proved by further evidence. And, incredulous though they were at first, incredulous even to the point of obstinacy, their Master alone, by his repeated appearances, convinced them that he was in truth the Crucified One, yet bearing all the marks and traces of his suffering ; and showed them, by the most palpable proofs, that he had a real body, that very body which had been nailed upon the cross. But, as he showed them this, so he showed them also that his glorious body had no longer the frailties of this life of suffering and death.

Before such evidence the impartial historian bows in submission, but the slave of preconceived opinions revolts against it. His philosophy compels him to deny miracles, at least what this philosophy calls miracles ; and, in order to deny miracles, he is ready to sacrifice the honesty or the intelligence of the witnesses. He will call them rogues and impostors, and, if the phrase should appear too strong, he will modify it, by an euphemism no less insulting, into visionaries and simpletons.

In reality, according to the school of those who deny the supernatural, Jesus died like one of us, and no more came to life than one of our own dead. His disciples concealed his body, and, by an imposture which may be explained but not justified by their fanaticism, they spread abroad the fable of the resurrection. This is an insulting explanation, and it is void of proofs ; it has nothing to support it. The Jews were the first to circulate among themselves this hypothesis, but they never proved it. It was the offspring of hate, propagated only by purchasing the testimony of a few soldiers, and these, the executioners of Jesus. Every arbitrary theory carries with it its own condemnation ; but as soon as it becomes calumnious, it becomes criminal. Now, all that history

teaches us concerning the disciples of Jesus, those whose simple natures were step by step transformed by contact with the holiest of Masters, forbids us to speak of them as rogues and impostors.

Thomas was the last of the Eleven to believe in his Master. Immediately upon the events, and just at the time when the pilgrims who had come to the Paschal feast were leaving Jerusalem, the disciples departed also and set forward towards Galilee. Jesus, in his lifetime, when he foretold the resurrection to them, had let them know that he would go before them thither; and the women who saw him after he was risen informed the Eleven of their Master's commands to them to return to Galilee, where they should meet him.

Capernaum was, in all probability, the place whither the disciples returned. Peter's house was there; and, more than ever before, he had become the centre round which the others rallied. But the narratives of the Evangelists only deal henceforward with one set of facts, the appearances of their risen Master, and all else naturally shrinks into obscurity beside them, for they had for their result that the faith of the disciples was confirmed, the consciousness of their mission aroused within them, and between themselves and Jesus an indissoluble union inaugurated which was to defy the world.

One evening, at Capernaum, were met together Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael the Canaanite, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. They were probably recalling to their minds the days when the Master was among them. That house, that lofty room in which they were assembled, those very walls, had sheltered him. That was his boat, the very one which used to be set apart for him. There was the place whither he loved to withdraw. Yonder the spot where he was wont to embark. The human heart does not change; it loves to awaken all the recollections which, as we recall the past, seem to give us our dear ones back again.

Peter returned to his nets. He said to his companions, I go a fishing. They said unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come, as they drew towards land, they saw a figure that seemed to be waiting for their boat to land. It was Jesus,

but none of the disciples knew him. And he said unto them, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered him, No. And he said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Then their eyes were opened, and that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked, and cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples rowed on in the ship, for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits, dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. In the mysterious meal which Jesus had prepared, we see a symbol of the providence with which he watched over his apostles. Jesus said unto them, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Simon Peter went up into the ship, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. He who had said once before to these same disciples, "I will make you fishers of men," showed them, by this abundant and unexpected capture, the future success of their apostolate. Jesus said unto them, "Come and dine." And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord, and being silenced by a holy dread. Jesus then came, and took bread, and gave to them, and fish likewise.

And when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" He said unto him, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He said unto him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him again the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He said unto him, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He said unto him, "Feed my sheep." He said unto him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, "Lovest thou me?" and answered in his unbounded love and confidence, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep."

Thus was Peter, who had denied his Lord, solemnly pardoned and rehabilitated in the presence of the apostles; thus was

the repentant and loving disciple raised to the primacy of the Kingdom. To Peter alone is entrusted the flock, the lambs and sheep, the faithful and their pastors ; it is for him to lead them to the pastures of Christ ; and, as souls are nourished only by the truth and strength and love of God, it is for Peter, the chief of shepherds, to communicate this truth to them by his teaching, and this strength and love by the sacraments. Jesus appointed him the custodian of these incorruptible treasures. The Church, as a hierarchy, is henceforth centred altogether in him. The word of the Lord created it in a single instant, on the shore of that very lake where he had promised Peter to make him a fisher of men.

But the sovereign office to which Jesus had exalted his apostle, by conferring upon him the fulness of his power under a form of words expressive of infinite love, "Feed my lambs ; feed my sheep," was not to be without its trials. Nothing divine is free from suffering. Peter was to undergo the fate of his Master ; he was destined for martyrdom no less than glory. Jesus thus announced it to him : "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest : but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." This is what Jesus reserves for his dearest and greatest apostles. Formed after his image, and carrying on his work among mankind, they must bear the stigmata of their Master, give themselves up, like him, to be sacrificed, and bear witness to the truth which they declare by the fulness of devotion and the heroism of sacrifice.

Again Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me." He seemed to have some more private matter to confide to him ; or perhaps he merely wished to show him, by this symbolic action, that in all things he was to follow in his footsteps. Peter obeyed, and, turning himself towards his companions, he saw John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, following with him, and he said unto Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do ? The question, though spoken in all affection, was yet not devoid of curiosity. Jesus rebuked him, saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me."

This answer had about it a certain air of mystery, which gave rise later, among John's disciples, to a strange belief.

They said that the beloved disciple would not die. The apostle himself rejected this interpretation, but without enlightening us as to the intentional obscurity of the saying concerning him. Jesus seems to have intended to contrast the violent death reserved for Peter with the more tranquil death of John. All the apostles, with Peter at their head, will die, he seems to say, by the hand of the executioner, but the long career of John will never be cut short by martyrdom. The beloved Master will come to take him away. He is destined to perpetuate to Christianity the sublimest words of Jesus. No one so well as he, in his saintly old age, shall have the power to recall the Master's sayings. And surely it was well that he, who had most tenderly loved him, should have the privilege of remembering him best of all.

The presence of the Eleven in Galilee, and their combined testimony to the resurrection, had now gathered around them many of the disciples whom the death of Jesus had dispersed. They did not all believe the words of the apostles, nor those of those other privileged beings to whom the Master had appeared. A new and more solemn manifestation was to confirm their wavering faith. It took place on one of the hills bordering upon the lake, no doubt on one of those to which Jesus had frequently been wont to retire with his apostles, to teach them and to pray. He had spoken of it beforehand to them as the place where they should see him again. Its name has faded from the memory of tradition. St. Paul, who speaks of this last appearance in Galilee, distinguishes it as one of the irrefutable proofs of the fact of the resurrection. He was seen, he says, of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

When they beheld him they worshipped him. Then Jesus came near unto them and spoke to them, affirming his sovereign and universal power, and the mission which was reserved for his disciples. He said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Each word uttered by the risen Jesus is filled with creative

power. When he said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," he created the sacerdotal power to judge and sanctify. When he said to Peter, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," he created the primacy in the supreme hierarchy of his Kingdom. When he said, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," he created the supreme power of the apostolate. He revealed to his apostles the boundless extent of their dominion, which is to be universal as God himself, because all men are invited to hear the voice of Jesus and to form part of his Kingdom. He sums up all that his apostles will have to tell mankind, that is, his own commandments. He set forth baptism to be the great sacrament of incorporation in the divine life which he has brought down upon earth, and which has for its end to raise us up to the Father, the never-failing source of this divine life, with the Son, who is its perfect manifestation, by the Holy Ghost, the only power capable of realising this incorporation.

Then he said unto them all, "I will be with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Not only is he released from the bonds of death, not only is he living, but he is free from all the limitations of mortality and life. In spite of time and space, he will always be present in the midst of his disciples. The apostles themselves experienced during their life-time the truth of this; they lived, as we may say, under the constant influence of their risen Master. Although visible only on rare occasions, he was with them and in them. He was with them to rally them, to lift them up, to triumph over the discouragement and incredulity, to take full possession of their minds, their consciences, their hearts, and to complete the organisation by which they should be armed invincibly to fulfil throughout the ages the work of the Kingdom of God. None else but he took part in the marvellous transformation of a few Galilaeans into the conquerors of the world. He would have them come together once again, to meet him, for the last time, at Jerusalem.

And so they left for ever the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, and that sea by whose shores they had received their call, and came to the Holy City, where the Master was awaiting them.

As the Eleven sat at meat, Jesus appeared in their midst, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. This reproach rings down through the centuries, and falls on all those who contemn the words of the witnesses entrusted with the mission of making public the life, death, and resurrection, the teachings and the hopes of Christ.

Then he reminded them of all that he had taught them when he lived among them, saying, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Then, that he might make clear to them the divine nature of the power that should come upon them, he added, "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." All such miracle-working power is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Whether it manifest itself visibly on the body, when it pleases God to confirm in this manner the superhuman work of his apostles; or invisibly on the soul in the privacy of the conscience, it is the same; in either case it proclaims the power of God.

Jesus took his apostles and led them out of the city, towards Bethany, to the top of the Mount of Olives. It was there that his agony, the bitter first-fruits of his passion, had been undergone; and it was there that he was to leave the earth and to enter into his glory above and in full view of the city which had crucified him, which still contained his tomb, and refused to acknowledge his triumph.

All the apostles and numerous disciples were present, and they put this question to the Master : Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? He answered, " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." We can see behind the question of the apostles the last remnants of those dreams of Jewish dominion which were about to be dispelled by the effulgence of the Spirit ; and we see, in the reply of Jesus, the last effort to turn their thoughts towards this Spirit, whose docile and invincible instruments they were to become.

" Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

These were his last words. He raised his hands, and blessed his apostles ; and while he was blessing them, they saw him parted from them, and carried up into heaven ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Henceforward, heaven is opened, and the kingdom of God established. The triumph of Jesus is begun. He leaves the earth only that he may free it from the bonds of evil and may save it : he has overcome the world.

# A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE

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AUTHOR

Life of Jesus Christ

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